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CHART PITT'S "THE EXTRA OUNCE" APPEARS COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER

CHICAGO LEDGER

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Balancing Up the Ledger.

THE tramp that writes the Editor's talks for him ever and anon was just in. He opined that he'd "take more of a shine to" that spiffy female on the cover bein' she'd sew those flowers on her hat more neat-like." He said further, that it was impossible for flora to maintain a decorous equilibrium when in such precarious juxtaposition to the brim of the sartorial finery. We answered nothing, but reached for the dictionary. That tramp is a bit—oh, just a tiny bit—too forward. He ought to realize that styles is styles!

THE Editor spoke of the prisoners in the Cook County jail (just across the street from the Boyce Building) singing cheerfully and melodiously. Begging his pardon for robbing the narratives of its idealistic touches, we feel it is only fair to relate, that yesterday we saw 'em throw bread and apple-cores at the head of a mounted police just below, and hit him, too. But what could he do? The culprits were already in jail. Moral: Jail has its advantages.

IN THE "Valley of Sleeping Slaves" one Dr. Von Schwerin talked glibly of the tripanosomata. The word was so intriguing that, in a sudden thirst for knowledge, we gathered together all sorts of stray information on the subject. Did you know, for instance, that the mortality in Uganda ranges from 20,000 to 30,000 per year on account of the deadly disease caused by the tsetse fly? This little insect is called by scientists, "dipterous," or two-winged, and it resembles the gad-fly which feeds on horses and cattle. It is confined to certain fixed localities, one of which is the strip of timber along the Victoria Nyanza. Its bite produces lethargy which ends almost invariably in death.

And to digress, we are reminded of an interesting description we read of Uganda wedding customs. The bride and groom must not wear their own clothes, but borrow from their friends, who vie with each other in lending them ornate garments for the occasion. The happy couple carry umbrellas, and the guests who follow in the wedding procession carry walking sticks. The bride is not considered presentable until she has been rubbed down with butter!

EVER since we read our lead story for this issue we have been wondering how sealion tastes. Like a well-cooked combination of wood-pulp, chamois-skin and black rubber, do you suppose?

Ledger stories this week will lead you a merry chase all over the map—not just the map of the United States, either, mind you. At the very outset you go aboard the Bluejay with old Jake Crane and cruise in the northern Pacific. You abandon the ocean for a quiet little middle western farm (quiet until Deacon Shortwell starts cussin', and you are barely acclimated before you change quarters for a hovel in Novo Redondo—a settlement in tropical Africa. Then you hear the laughter of Curly Flandrau, that lovable horse thief to whom William McLeod Raine introduced you, and you start following Crooked Trails and Straight, which wind thru the cattle country of Wyoming. Presently you find yourself playing the "Right Game" with the Circus Girl in little old N' Yawk—before you know it you have read the last word of the last line, and you are back in any one of the million homes to which the Ledger finds its way. A trip worth taking, wasn't it? And sh-sh-sh—next week's Ledger adds a new stop-off to the route, a place that isn't on the map at all. One that abounds with pitchforks and brimstone and bottomless abysses and free heat. But we'll never tell. The only way to find out is to turn to page 5 of the magazine for June 19.

No Fast Express.

AS THE car reached Cheshire an old man with a long, white beard rose feebly from a corner seat and tottered toward the door. He was, however, stopped by the conductor, who said:

"Your fare, please."

"I paid my fare."

"When? I don't remember it."

"Why, I paid it when I got on the car."

"Where did you get on?"

"At New Haven."

"That won't do! When I left New Haven there was only a little boy on the car."

"Yes," answered the old man, "I know it. I was that little boy."

The New Voter.

"IT SEEMS so silly to me," she said scornfully, as she threw down the newspaper after a casual glance at the headlines.

"What seems silly?"

"All this talk about candidates for the presidency. There can't but one be elected, can there?"

"Of course not."

"Well, why should a dozen or so be trying for it? Why doesn't just the man who is going to be elected be a candidate, and all the rest go on about their business, as all this talk and running around isn't going to do them any good after all?"—Life.

A Day in the Misleading City

By The Editor

THE other morning the Editor, taking a much-needed day off from the Ledger to attend to some business of his own, boarded a street car near his house to go to Seventy-Ninth and Halsted street. The car bore on the front the white-lettered sign "Halsted Street." The Editor rode for over an hour and then had to transfer "cross town," for the car proved in reality to be a Wentworth avenue car. The conductor, when queried, shrugged his shoulders. "Don't know why," he grunted, "but they always call this No. 7 car a Halsted street car. But the people are supposed to know that it goes down Wentworth avenue."

After he attended to his business, the Editor came back uptown. He had had no breakfast, so he entered a restaurant which bore the name "De Luxe Restaurant." Now, as every one knows, de luxe is a French word which means, in substance, "high class; A No. 1; for people of discrimination only." Now, the tablecloth in the De Luxe Restaurant turned out to be dirty. There were no napkins. The silver plate of the silverware was peeling off the steel underbase of the eating utensils. The coffee was chicory. The food was stale. The waiters were slovenly. Flies were thick. This was the de luxeness of the De Luxe Restaurant!

After he left the restaurant, he decided to while away an hour before another business engagement, so he entered a motion picture theater in the Loop which advertised "Charlie Chaplin." He sat thru five tedious reels of wild west stuff, full of streaks and "rain," as they call those vertical parallel flaws in old films, and when "Charlie Chaplin" finally came on, he proved to be a lugubrious looking individual with walrus whiskers and a paunch, who cavorted thru two reels of very tragic comedy! When the Editor went out, much wroth, and studied that sign, he found that the comedian advertised was one "Charlie Claplin," and somebody who chewed tobacco and had a penchant for marring white lithographs had aimed successfully enough to make an "l"—in an otherwise sufficiently misleading feature name—into an "h" and thus complete the job. Even now he wonders if perhaps the theater manager himself didn't do the trick the night before.

From here he went over to Michigan boulevard. While he was studying a sign, close to the Chicago Public Library, which read "No driving faster than 10 miles per hour past this point," he heard a whir, a whizz like a German shell, he jumped into the air, felt a wave of cold air beat against his cheek, and down the street saw the rear end of an automobile that was receding from view of himself, the pedestrians and the traffic cop at a rate not much less than sixty miles per hour. And even as he gazed after it, he had to sprint to safety once more, for a second streak of greased lightning proved that that corner where driving was limited to 10 miles per hour was not for any innocent like the Editor to stand around upon.

It was now noontime, and he entered a lunchroom called "The One-Minute Lunchroom," where he ordered a ham sandwich and a glass of milk. He had chosen the "One-Minute Lunchroom" in order to fill an important engagement at 12:30. Minute after minute rolled by. Every time he called the waiter to inquire after his ham sandwich, that individual informed him that it was being put together. All about him diners were fidgeting in their chairs. The man next to the Editor confided that he had been waiting for his dinner for forty-five minutes. Exactly thirty minutes after he entered the "One-Minute Lunchroom," the Editor's ham sandwich arrived. He ate it in a jiffy and reached his appointment—forty minutes late—on account of the "One-Minute Lunchroom."

After he had filled his appointment, the Editor decided to take in John Winters, the great tragedian, at the Circular Theater. He had seen John Winters year after year, in his various plays, and had never failed to derive enjoyment from this actor's artistic work. But this time John Winters fell down on the acting job, his work thruout was clumsy, amateurish. The play was good; the leading man was bad. On the outside, the Editor stopped under the great electric sign which advertised John Winters up and down State street for several blocks in either direction, and talked a moment with a theatrical acquaintance about the performance just seen. "Well," said his friend, flicking off the ashes of his cigarette in the gutter, "you didn't see John Winters under that makeup today. Winters was taken sick six weeks ago, just before the engagement opened, and his understudy has been carrying the leading part ever since."

After parting with his theatrical friend, the Editor turned his footsteps toward the river, deciding to walk over on the north side. But at the river he heard the familiar clang of the warning gong which tells the public that the bridge is open, and glancing out of the corner of his eye saw the brightly lighted sign which says "Bridge Open." So he sat down on a pile of street car ties and began to figure out a cover design for the Fourth of July number of the Ledger. Thus he sat for twenty full minutes, lost in abstraction, till a policeman tapped him on the shoulder. "No loafin' here," the bluecoat said. Answered the Editor: "But I'm waiting for the bridge to close so that I can cross over to the north side."

"Well," snickered the policeman, "ye'd better cross then, f'r there's been a short circuit in that electrical warnin' device all day, and she's been ringin' and shinin' since midnight last night!"

The Editor raised his frame and wearily plodded over the river and to the north side. Down near the Ledger plant, he boarded a thru route car No. 1 which pronounced "Clark-Devon" on the front of it. It carried him down Broadway and landed him out in the weeds near Rogers Park, with the result that he didn't get home to dinner that night at his home—near Clark and Devon—till close onto 9 o'clock.

The fiction writers and poets have called Chicago the City of Song, the City of Sin, the City of Noise and the Windy City. The Editor calls it the City of False Information.

The Editor.

Gentle Jabs.

No woman is a thing of beauty to her maid.

There are no buffet cars on a train of disasters.

Crooks might look better dressed in strait-jackets.

Sorrows of life enable us to appreciate the joys thereof.

The parting words of a barber are, "Which side, please?"

Beware of a man whose charitable gifts consist of sympathy.

He who is unable to collect his wits or his bills is in tough luck.

A bachelor who is given a baby to hold looks as helpless as a lost dog.

If a man doesn't wind up his bad habits his health will soon run down.

It's easy enough to forget your other troubles when you have the toothache.

Some men waste a lot of time trying to convince others that they are truthful.

Many young people fall in love because they are just as foolish as older people.

It's surprising how quickly a woman puts on weight when she sits on her husband's knees.

Sometimes a man is as badly frightened by an imaginary snake as a woman is by a real mouse.

Wise is the husband who, instead of trying to be all things to all men, tries to be all things to one woman.

Any man has sufficient will power to give up smoking—if he has a wife who is strong-minded enough to make him quit.

Instead of indicting bondsmen afterward, would it not be a good idea to investigate them before releasing the prisoners?

Civilization unfortunately has failed to develop a benefactor who will supply it with serviceable and economical flivver houses.

A man was arrested in Kansas City the other day for stealing the balls from a billiard saloon. But, hang it all, it's surely part of the game to pocket the balls!

Rimes of the Times

BY I. I. SIR.

ANTIDOTE.

To be taken by those who are suffering from the malady of optimism contracted by exposure to "Glad" books and "Sunshine" poems.

Ain't no use to stroll—
It'll rain.
Ain't no use to eat—
Only pain.
Ain't no use to write—
Pencils break.
Ain't no use to sleep—
Hafto wake.

Ain't no use to spend—
Big debt.
Ain't no use to save—
Lose it yet.
Ain't no use to cry—
Eyes red.
Ain't no use to laugh—
Soon be dead.

Ain't no use to bet—
Be tricked.
Ain't no use to fight—
Get licked.
Ain't no use to work—
Bad check.
Ain't no use to play—
Stacked deck.
AIN'T NO USE TO NUTHIN'
AW HECK!

THE EXTRA OUNCE

BY CHART PITT

OF LATE Jacob Crane had been tramping the tread-mills of trade a bit too steadily. He was beginning to feel the need of a good rest—and didn't have time to take it.

The wind blew in thru the open window, and a rose-petal came fluttering down and landed upon his desk. It was a challenge to him; an invitation from the summer, to go out into the green fields, and chase butterflies among the clover.

But Jacob Crane could not go. He had embarked upon a business career, and was standing with both his feet in the trough, trying to hog sweetmeats of trade.

His factory had turned out a small mountain of tin cans, each adorned with a three-colored picture of Jake himself; and contained seventeen ounces of—according to the label it was beef-stew.

Jake had planned out a whirlwind advertising campaign, to put the Extra Ounce Products on the market. He hadn't spared any money when it came to making up his copy. It was to be a full-page spread, to appear simultaneously in every magazine and newspaper in the country. He had hired the best artist he could find, and the picture showed Jake, fat and jolly as Santa Claus himself, passing out a plate of his wonderful Extra Ounce Stew to a hungry world. His product had been shipped to the distributing stations in readiness for the eager call that was to come. The worst of the battle was over. All he had to do now, was to sit back and watch the golden dollars come rolling in.

On the wall of his office, hung a 6-foot copy of his picture which was soon to become famous. A liberal supply of these large posters had been struck off especially for the retail trade. Jake had an ambition to hang one of these above every grocer's counter in America, figuring that the sight of it was sure to make customers hungry for beef-stew—and that extra ounce.

The manufacturer walked over and inspected the poster closely. This was the thirteenth time that same morning he had gone over to look at the glaring likeness upon the wall—and he enjoyed it as much as ever.

Tree-trunks, Barns and Fences Cried Aloud to the World That Jake Crane Was Putting an Extra Ounce of Stew Into His Cans. The Plump Figure of Old Jake Became a Part of the Very Landscape.

THERE was the sound of footsteps outside. Jake tip-toed back to his chair, and became very busy with some papers that lay on his desk. He could feel his ears burning guiltily. What if somebody had caught him in the act of admiring his own picture?

There was a knock upon the door, and Rief Snider, his advertising manager, came stamping into the room.

"Just the man I want to see," the manufacturer shoved a box of cigars toward his visitor. "We forgot to put a nice cloud of steam hovering over that plate of stew, in the picture—we don't want to be passing out cold stew to the people."

"It will be cold all right, by the time you get it passed out to anybody," Snider said wearily, as he slid into a chair, and helped himself to one of the gold-banded weeds.

"Why, what's the trouble now?" the Boss leaned forward anxiously.

"Them fool publishers won't run our copy," the ad-man groaned.

"I'll see about that!" Jacob snapped. "That's some of the Beef Trust's work—they are trying to boycott us—but I'll fight them till the rivers of Hell freeze up—and the Devil goes to running a skate factory."

"Nothing doing, Boss. It isn't the beef trust at all—it's the pure-food-campaign." Rief turned his head away. "Guess they must have been reading some of that stuff about the profiteers. They seemed right happy when I showed them my copy—and I let them see what a neat can we were turning out—and then the fools went and opened it—and took a taste."

Most men would have considered the jig was up. Printers' ink is the life-blood of trade. Without the aid of these glaring advertisements the Crane Stew wasn't going to sell, even if it did have an extra ounce in the the can.

If it came to a fight with the beef trust Jake was ready. He could fatten his cattle for pennies where it cost the other fellow good iron dollars. For the foresighted Mr. Crane had built his factory on the Oregon coast, where sea-lions were thick as flies—and they had the whole Pacific Ocean to pasture in.

Now the unreasonable publishers had refused to run his ad. But Old Jake was a fighter from the ground up. He was out after business, and like his namesake of Holy Writ, he wouldn't have had any scruples against bilking his father-in-law with a flock of ring-streaked and speckled cattle, if it happened in the way of trade.

He turned to his advertising agent, and there was the rasp of steel in his voice. "Get a few million copies of that big poster printed up—and then go out and plaster every barn in America with it. And don't forget to have that steam hovering above the plate. We are giving them their stew hot."

"They said something about having us arrested for fraud—if we tried to sell that stuff for beef?" the ad-man began doubtfully.

"Who ever said there was any beef in that stew?" Jake flung back at him. "We just call it extra-ounce stew—and I can prove that it is stew—and has got the extra ounce there, and then some. Of course there is a lot of beef-stew receipes on the back of the can—but I copied them out of the White House cookbook—got permission from the publishers, and gave them full credit. I was even careful not to mention anything about using my brand of stew in preparing the various dishes. They haven't got anything on us at all. We don't pretend to be selling beef-stew—we are selling that extra-ounce."

Snider took his hat and left, shaking his head doubtfully as he went. But Jake smiled up at his picture on the wall, confident and happy. "They

will have to wake up early in the morning if they get ahead of us?" he told the man in the poster.

A SMALL army of billposters went out into the highways and byways of America, carrying with them numberless copies of that glaring picture. Tree trunks, barns and fences cried aloud to the world that Jake Crane was putting an extra-ounce of stew into his cans. The plump figure of Old Jake became a part of the very landscape. Busy housewives caught up their market baskets and started for the grocers. Foot-sore tramps sat down in the dusty roads in front of those glaring pictures and wept as they watched the steam curling up from that tempting plate of stew.

Meanwhile the flood of gold was beginning to pour into the strong-box of Jacob Crane—not as much as he had expected, and it took a great many yellow-boys to keep an army of billposters on the road. But after all was paid, there remained enough to enable Jake to take a vacation and he needed it.

The voice of the wild was calling, bidding Jake Crane to go out and hold communion with a life where things were primeval and in the raw. Two roads lay before him. One led back to the hills, where the trails were high among the clouds, and deep, yawning crevasses lay waiting for unwary feet. The other led down to the broad breast of the flooded Columbia, and out over the bar to the sea—and everywhere.

Jake looked eastward to where the iced fangs of the Cascades were up-thrust into the blue Oregon sky, and decided that hill-trails were made for the young and the strong, and he was neither.

He reached for the telephone and barked an order to the man at the other end of the wire.

"Put a month's supply of grub aboard the Blue Jay—I'm going to take a run up to Puget Sound."

He hung up the receiver, and from there on to the end, Jake Crane was borne swiftly onward upon the rapid river of fate, over whose currents even an inventor of sea-lion stew had no control.

The day was soft and dreamy, but looking toward the Fall; when Jake cast off his lines and headed the Blue Jay out into the Willamet River, that carried him down to the great waterway of the Pacific slope, where the strong, sullen tides of the "mighty Oregon" rolled ever toward the sea.

THE gas engine sputtered noisily, but it was a call to adventure. Sweeping onward with the strong current, the little boat leaped toward the west. Timbered hills, farms and fishing-villages drifted past in swift procession. Astoria was left behind, and looking out over the bow, Jake saw the trolling-fleet fishing for salmon along the treacherous acres of the Columbia Bar, and beyond them, was the far blue sweep of the Pacific, heaving in measured motions, like the breast of some sleeping giant, whose dreams had been a bit unpleasant.

But Jake saw nothing but romance and adventure ahead. One hundred and fifty miles of open sea lay before him where naked, snarling beaches frothed and fumed even in calm weather. But this was the season of light winds, and Jake felt amply able to sail the Blue Jay in thru the Straits of Juan De Fuca, to the sheltered waters of Puget Sound, where he could cruise to his heart's desire. He had no intention of bringing the launch back to Portland himself. He would have no trouble in picking up a man in Seattle, to take it back for him; while he rolled southward in the cozy comfort of a Pullman car. Money could do anything, or at least Jake had found it so.

He ran well out beyond the Bar, and headed the Blue Jay into the North. Great glassy swells came rolling in from the broad reaches of the Pacific, swells that glided beneath the smooth bottom of the launch as tho they had been made of oil. Seagulls and whale-birds circled about him, diving close to the breast of the water in search of food. The endless cry of the birds was the only sound that lived in that watery world of which Jake Crane had become a part.

Night came down across the sea, a gauzy night that was woven of the flimsiest fabric, and colored in the softest of tones. Jake ate his supper, the best meal he had tasted for months. He hung out his running-lights, and settled down for his long trick at the wheel.

The Blue Jay was clipping along thru the darkness, eating up the miles like a grey-hound. The Westport Light was well astern by now, and soon dropped down behind the rolling heave of the great lonely ocean. Slowly—very slowly, the night-hours trickled out of the glass of time, and Jake Crane was getting sleepy.

Midnight came, and he could hardly keep his eyes open. The man who made the Extra Ounce Stew was a bad, bold man when it came to business, but he never had been a social-profligate. Summer or winter he was in bed by 9 o'clock, and life-long habits are hard to break.

He thought of shutting down his engine, and rigging up a make-shift sea-anchor out of his mud-hook and a pair of oars, so as to keep the launch head-on to the swells, and turn in for one sweet and glorious sleep. But Jake didn't fancy the idea of drifting, even in a boat. It was his nature to be up and going head-on and at full speed.

So the Blue Jay continued to pound away into the North, with a very sleepy skipper nodding over the wheel. Then he thought about his alarm clock in the after-cabin. He got it, and set it for a half hour ahead. He moved his stool up into a comfortable position, and proceeded to take a cat-nap.

Fifteen minutes later he awoke with a guilty start, and more than half expected to find the Jay poking her nose against the Washington Coast. But she wasn't.

It Was the Famous Extra Ounce Stew That the Publishers Had Boycotted!

She couldn't have done any better if he had been awake.

He dropped off to sleep again, but once more awoke before the alarm-clock did. He had been in the land of nod exactly fifteen minutes this time, and as before, the boat was holding her head in the right direction.

Thus the black hours slipped by in swift procession. Jake was going to sleep and waking up at regular intervals of fifteen minutes each. Every now and then he would have to true the Jay up a spoke or too, but in the main, she was a well-behaved old bird. And Jake himself—well he was some bird, too. Long ago he had discarded the alarm-clock, as a waste of energy.

THE old man patted himself on the back. If he had depended on the clock, the alarm probably would have laid down and died on him, and then he would have been out of luck! But his subconscious mind was on the job. Every fifteen minutes it would poke its head into the chamber of dreams, and page Jake Crane with loud-mouthed persistency. It was a good old subconscious mind—how could it help being good? Wasn't it a twin brother to that other brain of his, that pulled off the Extra Ounce deal, in spite of the publishers' boycott?

At last he awoke to see the light on Destruction Island winking away in the darkness ahead. Jake gave a sigh of relief. It was going to be easier now. All he would have to do would be to rouse up enough to catch the flash of Destruction, and wouldn't have to rub the sleep out of his eyes to examine the compass, and verify the course the Jay was taking.

He dropped off to sleep again, and fifteen minutes later awoke, just enough to catch the flash of good, old Destruction out over the bow.

"Go to her old girl—I'm getting so I enjoy this kind of sleeping," Jake muttered thickly as he settled down with his head on the wheel, sighed contentedly, and was off into the meadows of dreamland, where every tree was covered with Extra-ounce posters, and publishers had been driven out of business for good.

JAKE CRANE lifted his head from the wheel—and a great search-light flashed into his eyes. He poked his head out of the window, and once more that blinding glare leaped up in the darkness of the autumn night.

Sudden fear drove the haze of sleep from his brain. Dead ahead, the water was white with floating foam-balls; and over the clucking of the Blue Jay's engine, there came to him the gurgling whisper of tides surging thru naked rocks.

He reversed his clutch, and the heavy engine began pulling against the current that was sweeping them into the very jaws of death. Once more the light flashed, and then he saw the huge bulk of Destruction Island, with its high cliffs reared up against the stars. The faithful gas engine was pulling like a mule, trying to hold the launch off the beach, but every minute those murderous cliffs were drawing closer in the night.

Like a big black mountain Old Destruction rose up out of the gloom. It seemed that the whole island was trying to topple over, and bury them beneath its own wreckage. Jake Crane caught up a life-preserver and buckled it upon him. They didn't have one chance in a thousand —, and when the crash came, the old man intended to at least die fighting.

But at that minute the engine succeeded in overcoming the momentum of the launch. She came to a dead stop, and swiftly began to back away from those vampire beaches of Destruction that waited for hapless ships, under cover of the Pacific nights.

Spinning his wheel to starboard, he set the Blue Jay on the turn, till she was broadside to the beach. Then he threw the clutch into forward, flung the wheel hard to port, and once more they were pounding away thru the night, just skirting the island as they headed out toward the open sea. They didn't go far however.

Without a moment's warning the Blue Jay struck. A submerged rock ripped out her planking as tho she were an over-ripe tomato, and the cold waters of the Pacific rushed in to keep company with the amateur Skipper.

Jake was not a man to loose his head when trouble came. He remembered now that there was a long reef running out from the southwest end of the island. He had hit it head-on. One glance showed him that the Jay was done for. Like one of the fat, clumsy sealions that filled his stew-cans, he flopped over the side and swam for the shore.

WET and miserable he crawled out upon a narrow strip of the gravel beach just below the light. Above him reared the steep cliffs of Destruction. It seemed that a goat could not negotiate that sheer wall.

But desperation was with Jake as he climbed that night. Digging his toes into every crevice he could find, and clutching to the stunted bushes that grew among the rocks, he made his way upward. He was steaming like a turkish-bath by the time he pulled his exhausted body over the rim and saw the white buildings of the lighthouse just ahead.

(Continued on Page 14.)

DEACON SHORTWELL'S CUSSIN' COURTSHIP

By M. QUAD

DEACON SHORTWELL and the Widow Harris, whose farms adjoined, were not exactly engaged to be married when a certain April morning was ushered in with the songs of happy robins and the squeals of hungry pigs, but they had been "leaning that way" for the last year. They had been widow and widower for upwards of three years. For a year or more the deacon had been in the habit of dropping in two or three times a week and exhibiting something more than neighborly interest, and it was noticeable that the widow used a bit more hair dye than formerly, and was more solicitous about the freckles on her face. The neighbors had it that the thing was all settled, but they were a little too previous.

The deacon was a man who never bought a cow, signed a note, traded off a horse, or got a new pump for the well without careful deliberation, and on her part, the widow was willing to wait and study him a bit. He appeared to be a placid, even-tempered man, who fell over a hog or off the fence without too much language over it, but she remembered that volcanoes sometimes burst forth and rip and tear without any reasonable excuse.

Therefore, while there was a tacit and mutual understanding that in due time the deacon would boss both farms, and the widow to boot, and that she would darn his socks and make his bread in a housewifely way, he hadn't asked her straight from the shoulder if she would be his. Not having been asked, she hadn't laid her head on his shoulder and called him Samuel, and vowed to help look after spring calves and make soft soap that would be the envy of the whole county.

On that certain April morning referred to as a date to start from, the deacon dropped in to borrow a hoe, and the widow incidentally observed that her garden ought to be plowed. He agreed, but as his team of horses was busy, and as the widow's hired man was preparing a field of corn with her own, he decided to go over and borrow neighbor Johnson's yoke of oxen to do the work. If was real kind of him, and the widow didn't hesitate to say so, and the bluebirds piped and the lambs gamboled as the widower hastened away on his errand. Farmer Johnson was willing to lend his oxen, his plow, or anything else around the farm that was portable, but before yoking the bovines up, he rather cautiously observed:

"Deacon, I don't remember that you ever owned a yoke of oxen yourself."

"No, I never have," was the reply.

"And mebbe you never used anybody else's to plow with?"

"I can't say that I ever did."

"Wall, oxen ain't exactly like hosses, you know—not exactly. They sometimes get streaky and act up, and you've got to humor 'em. Coaxin' will sometimes do the bizness, and then, again, you'll have to put on the gad. If you was only in the habit of usin' a few cuss words I'd feel purty sure you would come out all right, but mebbe you will anyhow. We'll yoke 'em up and start you off in no time."

It was only a half mile from Farmer Johnson's to the Widow Harris', but the deacon was a long time in making the trip back with the oxen, and he arrived with the look of a man who had been in trouble. The widow noticed his perturbation, and solicitously inquired:

"Did you stub your toe or lose your hat, or anything?"

"Of course not. What makes you ask?"

"Because you look so flustrated. Mebbe you are going to break out with the hives. If I was you, I should take the plowing kind o'easy."

The deacon muttered some reply under his breath, and after a brief rest the work of plowing the garden began. That is, he thought it had, but he was mistaken. The plow point had scarcely entered the rich soil of the old tomato bed, when the oxen turned to the left with a rush, and would have gone clear across the garden had they not been stopped by a plum tree.

"By hen, but did anybody ever see the likes of that!" exclaimed the deacon, as he held on to the plow handles and followed along on the jump. "If I owned these critters I'd have their hides on the fence within half an hour!"

"What's the matter, deacon?" asked the widow, from the open kitchen window.

"Nuthin'—nuthin' 'tall," was the reply. "The oxen jest come over here to see whether this was a peach or a plum tree."

"Oh, they did, eh? 'Pear to be pretty smart yoke of oxen. Mebbe they'll next be trying to find out the difference between apple sass and pumpkin pie. The three of you seemed to be in a great hurry about it."

Farmer Johnson had said that coaxing would sometimes do the business, and Deacon Shortwell proceeded to coax. After he had made use of about 5,000 of the most honeyed words in the English language, he got the oxen back to the starting point, and they plowed a furrow almost ten feet long before making their next rush. This time they turned to the right and fled over the spot where cucumbers used to grow and brought against the fence with a bang.

"Now, by gum, but what they need is to have their horns knocked off with a club!" muttered the deacon, as he stood and gritted his teeth and felt that he was being humiliated.

"HEY, but was that thunder?" asked the widow, as she thrust her head out again.

"I didn't hear no thunder," the plowman replied, knowing that she referred to the crash against the fence.

"Well, this is the month for thunder storms, and I didn't know but one was coming up. What are the oxen doing over there?"

"Looking over the fence."

"Well, let 'em look. I suppose that oxen want to look around and see what's going on as well as other folks. I'd take it easy if I was you; your face is as red as paint, and you are breathing as if a cider barrel had rolled over you."

The deacon thought of shotguns and bowie knives and rawhides as he turned to the oxen again; but he got a grip on himself and suavely and blandly argued the case until "Buck" and "Bright" concluded to lengthen out that furrow. Their attitude was all humility as they dragged the plow to the spot, and nothing indicated a strike for shorter hours as they started off. They had wandered along for a distance of fifteen feet and three or four inches, and the deacon was saying to himself that he who controlled his own temper was greater than the jawbone of an ass, when there was a third rush. This time it was straight ahead, and the full length of the garden, and as the plowman sought to keep fast hold he was flung this way and that, and finally found himself tangled up with an old strawberry bed.

"Now, by the horn spoon of the horned jackass, but this is too much—too much!" he shouted as he scrambled up and found a club, which Providence seemed to have started to that very spot.

"It is thunder after all, deacon?" sweetly inquired the widow, as she appeared in the kitchen door, this time with flour on her hands and apron.

"Yes, it's thunder, and lightning, too!" he almost shouted, as he moistened his hands to get a grip on the club.

"What is it—what are you going to do?"

The deacon didn't answer. He wanted all his breath for what was about to happen. He gripped the club and made for the oxen, and for ten minutes there was a circus in town with free admission. He pounded and swatted and batted, and as the club rose and fell he brought out a reserve stock of English language to take the cake over anything Farmer Johnson had ever thought of. When he was so utterly exhausted that he could neither strike nor talk further without rest, he found the Widow Harris beside him and saying:

"Deacon Shortwell, I wouldn't a-believed it, not if the minister had told me so himself."

"I don't care a d—n whether you would or not!" he hoarsely replied.

"Oh, you don't, eh? Well, you you've let the cat out of the bag at last. Deacon, you are a cruel-hearted man, and you swear like a pirate. I can never marry such a man."

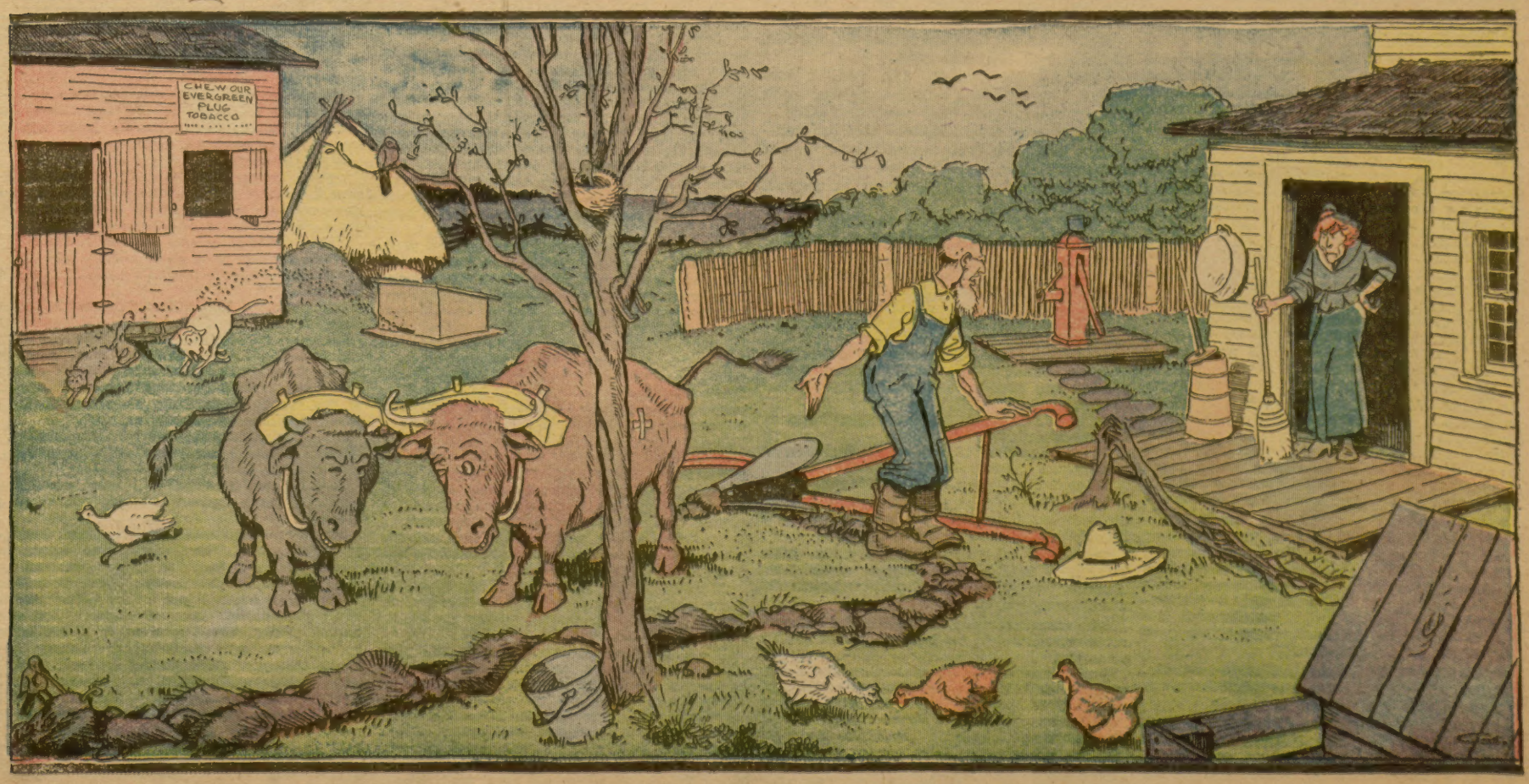
"Nobody has asked you to. D—n their hides, but I'd like to murder 'em!"

"More cruelty! More cussing! I thought there might be something hidden under that soft, sleek way of yours. Oxen ain't exactly women, and wives ain't exactly oxen, but a man who will cuss and pound his oxen will naturally——"

"Mebbe you'd like to try 'em yourself?" interrupted the deacon, as a brilliant thought came to him.

"I would. I have never driven oxen in my life, but I know I can do better'n you. Gimme the gad. Now, then, haw, Buck—gee, Bright. See there! As soon as they find out that nobody is going to break their ribs or cuss them blind they are as docile as cats. You hold the plow and I'll drive."

FIVE minutes later the furrow had been extended 4 feet more, and the plow point was getting ready to rip up the soil in the good old way, when the oxen flourished their tails and bolted. The deacon



"The Oxen Jest Come Over Here to See Whether This Was a Peach or a Plum Tree."

went whirling at the first twist of the plow, but the widow was game, and she raced along with the bolters and put the whip over their noses. She might possibly have stopped them before they got over the county line, but for an accident. Oxen and woman struck and overturned a bee-hive in their mad career, and the 10,000 bees loafing around came up to the scratch in the promptest and most cheerful manner. The deacon witnessed the beginning of the scrap, and even waited until a stray bee had lifted his heels off the ground for humanity's sake, but then he fled, and it was two days later that he knew that the widow had sixty-one lumps on her body and was doing as well as could be expected, and that the oxen had been heard of forty miles away and still on the run.

"Deacon," began the widow, as he made his appearance in response to her message, "I believe you cussed them oxen the other day."

"I—I guess I did," he rather sheepishly replied.

"But it was for yourself, deacon. I now wish you to cuss 'em for me. You also clubbed 'em till you tired out. Can't you club 'em some more?"

"And you ain't—ain't mad at me?" he asked, as a look of relief came to his face.

"La, no—not a mite."

"And I ain't cruel-hearted nor a hypocrite and a pirate?"

"No, deacon. On the contrary, you are one of the best men on earth, or will be after you have bought them oxen and peeled their pesky hides off."

"And about—about——?" stammered the deacon, as the sunburn deepened on his face and he hitched around as if he sat on splinters.

"About our getting married? Well, Samuel, you can fix the date to suit yourself, and I will be there. I can't get up to eat supper with you on account of these sixtyo-two bumps and swellings, but I've told the girl to make hot biscuit and put on that clover honey in the comb, and you jest help yourself and feel right to home."

* * *

When Jimmers Mixed.

"HOW is Jimmers for our work?" asked the stout politician. "I have noticed that he is a good mixer. He has a lot of good friends in the ward. That is the kind of lad we want in this business."

"Yes and no," was the cryptic response of the tall ward worker. "I'll admit Jimmers is there with the friends and the glad hand. And he'd be a wonder, a wiz, if he could be trained. As he stands now he's about as useful as a prohibitionist at a meeting of the Bartenders' union."

"How do you dope that out?"

"Like this: Jimmers has no political horse sense. He reminds me of a setter I had one time. He'd be sent out to run down a rabbit, and before he got halfway he'd come across a chipmunk or a toad and forget all about his quarry. He couldn't keep his mind on the rabbit.

"That's how Jimmers turned out last year. We had our campaign going full blast, you remember, and the opposition was crowding us to the rail at the turn. We tried to put over a rally in the ninth inning, so we decided to ring in a few of these obedient, well liked boys and let 'em try their hands. In picking these workers some one spotted Jimmers and predicted that if he was allowed to visit the big nobs on the avenue he'd pull them over to our side without sweating a hair.

"We called in Jimmers one day and gave him directions. We coached him in a line of talk and left the rest to him. We gave him a list of opposition voters and turned him loose.

"Jimmers was some salve spreader, all right! Some oil can! We found that his first call was on Hibbins, who owns the Umptieth National bank. We wanted Hibbins more than any one else. And Jimmers made him a friend. But instead of talking politics to Hibbins, Jimmers noticed a saxophone in Hibbins' library and got into an argument on music. Hibbins was a music fan and so was Jimmers. Hibbins and Jimmers spent the whole evening finding out which could hit the highest note on the thing. Jimmers stayed until 12 o'clock and never chirped about our candidate.

"But that wasn't all. He met the lovely Miss Whang at the Whang home, where we expected to line up the seven women voters, and fell in love with the lady. He called there again the next evening and the next, and a week later we discovered that he had missed eighty calls and had never mentioned our man to the Whangs.

"Yeah, we lost that precinct, and our man lost the ward. When we called Jimmers to headquarters to read him out of the party he didn't know what he had done. This is straight—he began to talk about Ouija boards and the Einstein theory. What are you going to do with a boob like that?"

"Well," said the stout politician sagely, "I suppose we'll have to be satisfied with his vote and his wife's."

"Say!" said the tall ward worker, "you know he married that Whang girl. And if we get her I'll say she can swing his vote and the votes of every woman in that part of the ward."

The Stolen $5,000

By Frederick M. Holmes

"I Heard——" the Stranger Stopped and Cleared His Throat Before Continuing, "I Heard That He Was Robbed Once."

HE WAS stopped by a clerk in the outer office, for Mr. Paul Redmond was a very busy methodical man.

The tall, sunburnt man was full of nervous energy and only paused when the clerk finally laid his hand on his arm.

"Name? No, no name. That is, I'll tell Mr. Redmond—he knows me—and he will be glad to see me. Very glad to see me," he repeated, with a nervous laugh.

But it would be impossible to see Mr. Redmond at that moment.

"Wait? An hour? Oh, yes, I can wait. It—it isn't forty years, you know;" and again that rasping laugh.

The young man looked at him curiously, but gave him a chair and he sat down near the clerk's desk.

Slowly the minutes passed in almost painful silence.

"How long have you worked here, young man?" The clerk started at the harsh tones of the visitor.

"Five years, lacking two months."

"Know Mr. Redmond well?"

"As well as most of the office force. Mr. Redmond doesn't spend much time personally on any one of us."

"How long has he been well off—fixed, I mean, about like this?" The stranger waved his hand to include the whole business block.

"I don't know; he's always been a manufacturer."

"Had a severe loss when he was a young man, didn't he?"

"Not that I know of, tho it is possible."

"I heard——" the stranger stopped and cleared his throat before continuing. "I heard that he was—robbed, once."

But the clerk was trying to talk over the telephone and his mind was not on the visitor. "I never heard of that," was all he said.

The man became silent. His head sank on one hand and he became absorbed in thought.

Forty years! Forty summers and forty winters of toil, of privation, of suffering. And all because of one misdeed. They faded away as he sat there thinking and he was back again in the little frontier city in the spring then, even as it was spring now. Paul Redmond was his friend. He well remembered the day Redmond showed him the envelope. Could he ever forget it? Five crisp one thousand dollar bills were in it. Wild he had often been, but dishonest never until then. To disarm suspicion he gave Redmond a thousand dollars, and asked him to put it with what he had and take charge of it.

He lived that night over again. Redmond was a sound sleeper. He got up noiselessly, dressed in the dark, felt for the envelope in Redmond's clothes, slipped it into his pocket and went out with the guilty conscience that was never to leave him.

And then the irony of fate! He was scarcely out of the hotel when he fell in with the drunken mob who were celebrating some new gold find. They hustled him 'round the bonfire they had built, and in the struggle the envelope fell to the ground. A drunken man tossed it into the very heart of the flames and they jeered at his shrieks and vain efforts. And then, when he finally escaped them, he fled almost penniless from the place and his crime went with him.

Then came the struggle of years with poverty and often with sickness until three years before he had struck a paying claim. He had cleared fifty thousand dollars, but the money could not wipe out the memory of that crime and he was back to face the man whom he had robbed—to pay the penalty.

And Redmond was a rich man. What if he would not accept money in settlement of his loss? What if he called in officers of the law?

A HAND touched his arm and he started. It was the clerk.

"Mr. Redmond will see you at once," he said.

The caller followed without a word.

"Do you know me?" he asked, as the alert, clean-shaven man wheeled in his chair and looked at him.

There was a close scrutiny, but no sign of recognition came in Redmond's face. "I cannot exactly place you," he replied, slowly.

"I—I was with you—going to the mines, some forty years ago. I—stopped with you that—that night at the Planet Hotel."

"Why, on my word, it's John Rankin," cried the manufacturer, springing to his feet and advancing with outstretched hand, "how are you, John? Take a seat, man; I haven't seen you in I don't know how many years."

"Forty," said Rankin mechanically.

"Well, well, sit down."

"No," stammered the visitor, "not yet. I'll stand up now, like a man."

Redmond glanced keenly at him and Rankin faltered for an instant. He found it terribly hard to begin, and while in his imagination he had gone thru this meeting scores of times, yet never had he dreamed of such a reception as this. What did the man mean?

Was he playing with him?

"Well," he broke out harshly, "I may as well tell you at once; I have come to settle up. You never expected to see me again, did you?"

"Why, yes, John," replied the other. "I thought you would turn up some day or other and, not knowing when you would come, I have tried to keep prepared for you."

The cool, even tones affected Rankin more than a threat; or was it intended as a threat?

"I've been a poor man all my life, Redmond, or I should have been back here before. But three years ago my luck changed; I am worth $50,000 today. I have lived most of my life in poverty and it may be worse; it depends on you. I can't change the past, but perhaps I can pay the penalty. I am ready to settle up. What's the terms?"

Redmond turned methodically to his desk, pulled out a thin book, opened it, read a few minutes and turning back again, answered, "The terms are, approximately, fifty thousand dollars."

Rankin caught his breath sharply. A beggar again and over sixty years of life gone! Well, at least he would be a free man.

"I suppose those are the best terms you will make?" he found himself asking.

Redmond looked at him in surprise. "I should say they were," he retorted, decisively.

"Then let's have it over as soon as we can," said the miner. "Fifty thousand dollars. Well, that's pretty good interest on five thousand, even counting compound interest."

"Five thousand dollars?" echoed Redmond, lifting his eyebrows, "I think you have made a little mistake in the amount, John, it was only one thousand dollars."

"What was only one thousand dollars?"

"The money you gave me."

"The money—I—gave—you?" cried Rankin.

"Certainly. When you disappeared and I could find no trace of you I invested your one thousand dollars with my five thousand. Mighty handy it was, too, for I have kept track of it all these years and have credited you with what it made. It figures to about fifty thousand dollars now; I will write you a check."

Rankin sank helplessly in his chair.

"But I heard you lost it all," he gasped.

"Lost it, how?"

"I—I heard you had it stolen, envelope and all, from your clothes while you slept."

Redmond laid back and laughed heartily. "Stolen? Why, man alive, what do you take me for? I never carried it with me except for a short time that day before you left. I put it all in the bank that afternoon. An envelope? Let me think. Why, now I remember, I did have a big envelope containing mining information and advertising matter. Probably it dropped out of my pocket for I don't remember seeing it again. But I guess, John, you've lost more than that since we last met."

"Yes," groaned Rankin, brokenly. "I've lost forty years, but—but it's all right now."

CROOKED TRAILS AND STRAIGHT

BY WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE

A Bird's-eye View of the Traveled Trail.

CURLY FLANDRAU had not intended to become a horse-thief. He was only a young, adventuresome boy who had become involved in questionable circumstances thru his companions,

LUTE BLACKWELL, ex-convict, and

BAD BILL CRANSTON. Neither had Curly meant to harm the sheriff,

LUCK CULLISON, the best liked man in the county. He was simply afraid of being captured by the posse the sheriff headed, and in his panic he shot wildly. About to be lynched by the cowboys, Curly was saved by

KATE CULLISON, the daughter of Sheriff Cullison, whom Flandrau had wounded. Later, her father questioned Flandrau as to the whereabouts of his son,

YOUNG SAM CULLISON, who was ruining his life just as Curly had thru evil companionship, especially that of

SOAPY STONE, a hardened criminal who hated the elder Cullison and was seeking revenge by corrupting his son.

The eccentric sheriff went the bond of this boy who had shot him; and to repay the kindness Curly resolved to rescue Sam from the downward road. In order to do this he rode over to Soapy's outfit, where he found Sam, Bad Bill, Soapy and Blackwell in an orgy of drinking and gambling.

This story began in No. 22, the Ledger for May 29. Back copies may be obtained thru this office, from our agents or newsdealers.

PART III.

CHAPTER VIII.

A REHEARSED QUARREL.

BECAUSE he could not persuade him to join in their drinking bouts, Stone nicknamed Curly the good bad man.

"He's the prize tough in Arizona, only he's promised his ma not to look on the wine when it is red," Blackwell sneered.

Flandrau smiled amiably, and retorted as best he could. It was his cue not to take offence unless it were necessary.

It was perhaps on account of this good nature that Blackwell made a mistake. He picked on the young man to be the butt of his coarse pleasantries. Day after day he pointed his jeers at Curly, who continued to grin as if he did not care.

When the worm turned, it happened that they were all sitting on the porch. Curly was sewing a broken stirrup leather. Blackwell had a quirt in his hand, and from time to time flicked it at the back of his victim. Twice the lash stung, not hard, but with pepper enough to hurt. Each time the young man asked him to stop.

Blackwell snapped the quirt once too often. When he picked himself out of the dust five seconds later, he was the maddest man in Arizona. Like a bull he lowered his head and rushed. Curly sidestepped and lashed out hard with his left.

The convict whirled, shook the hair out of his eyes, and charged again. It was a sledge-hammer bout, with no rules except to hit the other man often and hard. Twice Curly went down from chance blows, but each time he rolled away and got to his feet before his heavy foe could close with him. Blackwell had no science. His arms went like flails. Tho by sheer strength he kept Flandrau backing, the latter hit cleaner and with more punishing effect.

Curly watched his chance, dodged a wild swing, and threw himself forward hard with his shoulder against the chest of the convict. The man staggered back, tripped on the lowest step of the porch, and went down hard. The fall knocked the breath out of him.

"Had enough?" demanded Curly.

For answer Blackwell bit his thumb savagely.

"Since you like it so well, have another taste." Curly, now thoroly angry, sent a short-arm jolt to the mouth.

The man underneath tried to throw him off, but Flandrau's fingers found his hairy throat and tightly grasped it.

"You're killing me," the convict gasped.

"Enough?"

"Y-yes."

Curly stepped back quickly, ready either for a knife or a gunplay. Blackwell got to his feet, and glared at him.

"A man is like a watermelon; you can't most generally tell how good he is till you thump him," Sam chuckled.

Cranston laughed. "Curly was not so ripe for picking as you figured, Lute. If you'd asked me, I could a-told you to put in yore spare time letting him alone. But a fellow has to buy his own experience."

The victor offered his hand to Blackwell. "I had a little luck. We'll call it quits if you say so."

"I stumbled over the step," the beaten man snarled.

"Sure. I had all the luck."

"Looked to me like you were making yore own luck, kid," Bad Bill differed.

The paroled convict went into the house, swearing to get even. His face was livid with fury.

"You wouldn't think a little thing like a whaling given fair and square would make a man hold a grudge. My system has absorbed se-ve-real without doing it any harm." Sam stooped to inspect a rapidly discoloring eye. "Say, Curly, he hung a peach of a lamp on you."

Soapy made no comment in words, but he looked at Flandrau with a new respect. For the first time a doubt as to the wisdom of letting him stay at the ranch crossed his mind.

His suspicion was justified. Curly had been living on the edge of a secret for weeks. Mystery was in the air. More than once he had turned a corner to find the other four whispering over something. The group had disintegrated at once with a casual indifference that did not deceive. Occasionally a man had ridden into the yard late at night for private talk with Stone, and Curly was morally certain that the man was the little cowpuncher Dutch of the Circle C.

Thru it all Curly wore a manner of open confidence. The furtive whisperings did not appear to arouse his curiosity, nor did he intercept any of the knowing looks that sometimes were exchanged. But all the time his brain was busy with questions. What were they up to? What was it they had planned?

STONE and Blackwell rode away one morning. To Curly the word was given that they were going to Mesa. Four days later Soapy returned alone. Lute had found a job, he said.

"That a paper sticking out of your pocket?" Flandrau asked.

Soapy, still astride his horse, tossed the Saguache Sentinel to him as he turned toward the stable.

"Lie number one nailed," Curly said to himself. "How came he with a Saguache paper if he's been to Mesa?"

Caught between the folds of the paper was a railroad time table. It was a schedule of the trains of the Texas, Arizona & Texas Pacific for July. This was the twenty-ninth of June. Certainly Soapy had lost no time getting the new folder as soon as it was issued. Why? He might be going traveling. If so, what had that to do with the mystery agitating him and his friends?

Curly turned the pages idly till a penciled marking caught his eye. Under Number 4's time was scrawled, just below Saguache, the word Tin Cup, and opposite it the figures 10:19. The express was due to leave Saguache at 9:57 in the evening. From there it pushed up to the divide and slid down with air brakes set to Tin Cup, three thousand feet lower. Soapy could not want to catch the train fifteen miles the other side of Saguache. But this note on the margin showed that he was interested in the time it reached the water tank. There must be a reason for it.

Stone came back hurriedly from the corral, to find Curly absorbed in the "Sentinel."

"Seen anything of a railroad folder? I must a-dropped it."

"It was stuck in the paper. I notice there's liable to be trouble between Fendrick and the cattle interests over his sheep," the reader answered casually.

"Yep. Between Fendrick and Cullison, anyhow." Stone reclaimed and pocketed his time table.

Incidentally Flandrau's doubt had been converted into a lively suspicion. Presently he took a gun, and strolled off to shoot birds. What he really wanted was to be alone so that he could think the matter over. Coming home in the dusk, he saw Stone and young Cullison with their heads together down by the corral. Curious to see how long this earnest talk would last. Curly sat down on a rock, and watched them, himself unobserved. They appeared to be rehearsing some kind of a scene, of which Soapy was stage director.

The man on the rock smiled grimly. "They're having a quarrel, look like. . . . Now the kid's telling Soapy to go to Guinea, and Soapy's pawing around mad as a bull moose. It's all a play. They don't mean it. But why? I reckon this dress rhearsal ain't for the calves in the corral."

Curly's mind was so full of guesses that his poker was not up to par that night. About daybreak he began to see his way into the maze. His first gleam of light was when a row started between Soapy and Cullison. Before any one could say a word to stop them they were going thru with that identical corral quarrel.

Flandrau knew now they had been preparing it for his benefit. Cranston chipped in against Sam, and to keep up appearance Curly backed the boy. The quarrel grew furious. At last Sam drove his fist down on the table and said he was thru with the outfit and was going back to Saguache.

"Yo tambien," agreed Curly. "Not that I've got anything against the horse ranch. That ain't it. But I'm sure pining for to bust the bank at Bronson's.

'Round and round the little ball goes,
Where it will land nobody knows.'

I've got forty plunks burning my jeans. I've got to separate myself from it or make my roll a thousand."

THE end of it was that both Sam and Curly went down to the corral and saddled their ponies. To the last the conspirators played up to their parts.

"D—d good riddance," Stone called after them as they rode away.

"When I find out I'm doing business with fourflushers, I quit them cold," Sam called back angrily.

Curly was amused. He wanted to tell his friend that they had pulled off their play very well. But he did not.

Still according to program, Sam sulked for the first few miles of their journey. But before they reached the Bar 99 he grew sunny again.

"I'm going to have a talk with Laura while I'm so near," he explained.

"Yes, that will be fine. From the way the old man talked when I was there, I expect he'll kill the fatted yearling for you."

"I don't figure on including the old man in my call. What's the use of having a friend along if you don't use him? You drift in . . . just happen along, you know. I'll stay in the scrub pines up here. If the old man is absent scenery, you wave your bandanna real industrious. If he is at home, give Laura the tip and she'll know where to find me."

The owner of the ranch, as it happened, was cutting trail over by Agua Caliente.

"Do you want to see him very bad, Mr. Flandrau?" asked Miss Laura demurely.

"My friends call me Curly."

"I meant to say Curly."

"That's what I thought. No, I can't say I've lost Mr. London."

"You inquired for him."

"Hmp! That's different. When I used to come home from the swimming hole contrary to orders, I used to ask where Dad was, but I didn't want to see him."

"I see. Did you come down from the horse ranch?"

"You've guessed it right."

"Then I'm sorry I can't ask you to 'light. Dad's orders."

"You've got lots of respect for his orders, haven't you?" he derided.

"Yes, I have." She could not quite make up her mind whether to laugh or become indignant.

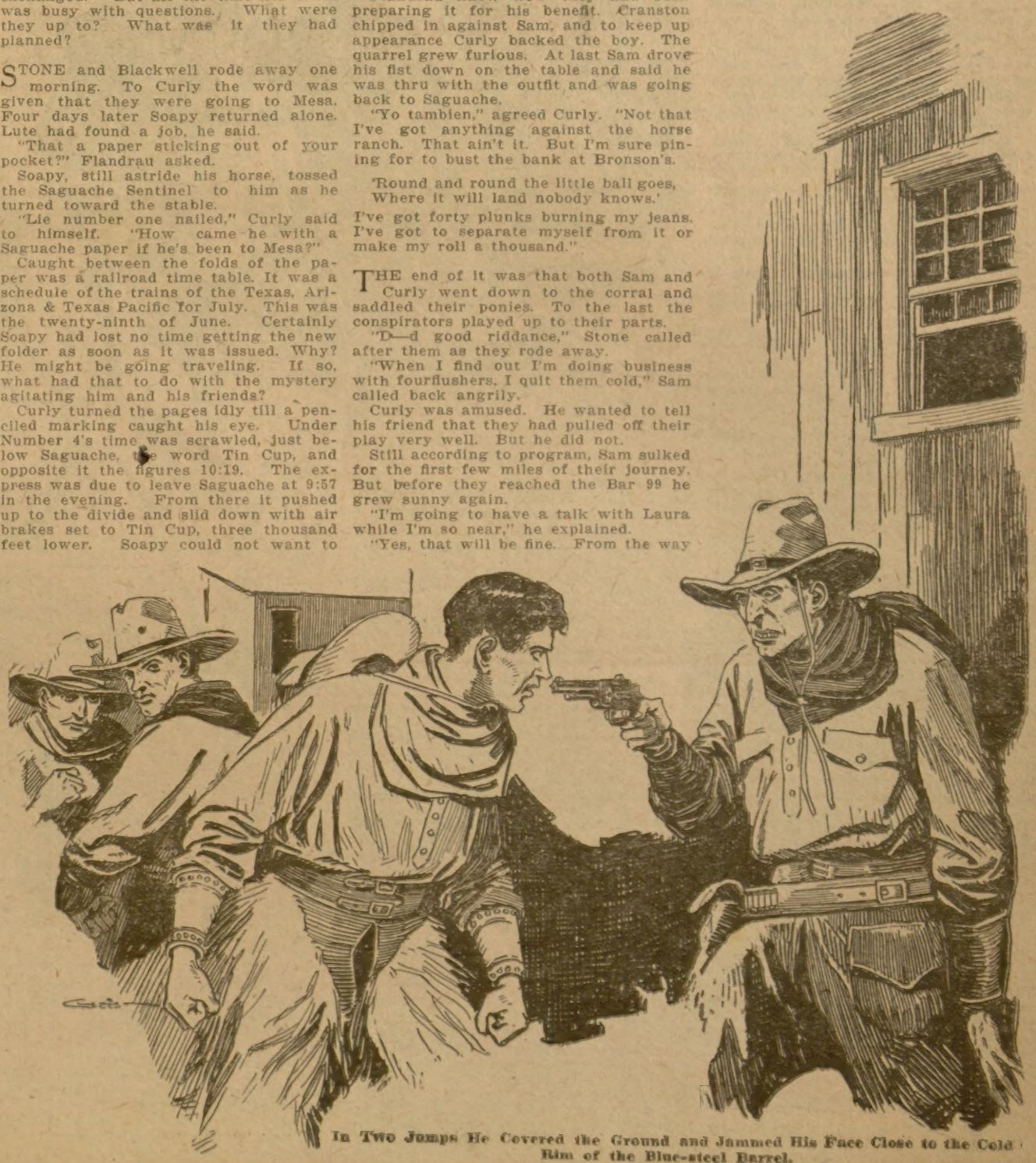
"Then there's no use trying to tell you the news from the ranch."

A smile dimpled her cheeks and bubbled in her eyes. "If you should tell me, I suppose I couldn't help hearing."

"But I'm trying to figure out my duty. Maybe I oughtn't to tempt you."

"While you're making up your mind,

(Continued on Page 17.)



In Two Jumps He Covered the Ground and Jammed His Face Close to the Cold Rim of the Blue-steel Barrel.

THE VALLEY OF SLEEPING SLAVES

BY VICTOR ROUSSEAU

IF YOU missed the first installment you can still begin the story with this short outline of events.

There were only two white men in Novo Redondo, a settlement in tropical Africa, and their meeting came about in a peculiar way. It was in a barroom where the Portuguese negroes, slaves, overseers, plantation owners, and professional gamblers congregated to forget the heat over a game and a drink.

JOHN CARTER, Englishman, was not quite himself, but he knew that Marie D' Vaz was being insulted by a Portuguese,

NADEAU. Carter had never heard of the girl before, but, as he told

MATT BARRETT afterward, he wasn't "going to stand by and hear that said of her. Barrett had plunged into the fight because Carter was the first white man he had seen during the six days he had been in Novo Redondo. He owned a mine which he hoped would prove valuable for its rubies, and, taking a liking to Carter after their strange meeting, Barrett invited him to go along to inspect the property.

DOM EMILIO PAEZ, a rich plantation owner, had offered a price for the mine, and on their way they stopped as guests at his plantation. Paez turned out to be the master of the overseer, Nadeau, and the guardian of

MARIE D' VAZ. Paez humiliated the girl by relating her most intimate history—her father had betrayed the wife of Dom Emilio and instead of casting the child off, Emilio had kept her with him after the death of his wife (the natives said Dom Emilio had killed her) and revenged himself by telling the story in her presence to chance visitors.

Carter and Barren were enraged by the cruelty Emilio showed toward the girl, and took themselves off, determined to "fight him to a finish." The next day they both became mysteriously ill, and, fearing the sleeping sickness, consulted

VON SCHWERIN, a German professor, who was making experiments with the tsetse fly.

CHAPTER V.

"NO, NO, you don't get sleeping sickness like that," Von Schwerin answered. "Long, it takes—a month, a year sometimes. Never less than a week. And Europeans don't get him, unless they are bitten again and again. The phagocytes in the blood, they pounce him, like cat on mouse. Only the negro is susceptible to ordinary exposure. I think yours is one of the filariae. But if you are going up the country, you will want to know which one. He is persistent. You must keep dosing. And every 24 hours there is a new family. But we shall see."

He struck a match, held the point of one of the tiny needles in it for an instant, and then drew a single drop of blood from Matt's finger-tip, which he let fall from the needle point upon a tiny plate of glass. Uncorking a little phial, he let a few drops of some sticky brown substance drip upon the glass; then placed a second plate above it. Afterward he repeated the procedure with Carter.

"I shall examine him as soon as the serum separates," he said. "That is a world to him—a nice leetle world, where he shall propagate and fill the earth. A world of food, Mr. Carter, with nothing for him to do but eat and make love. Perhaps our world, too, is nothing but a drop of serum in a big Professor Von Schwerin's laboratory, and the moon a smaller drop, and the sun and stars little round bottles on shelves. Eh?"

He laughed as he snapped his bag together.

"This afternoon I let you know," he said. "You stay in bed till you feel better. The quinine will do no harm. And some day I shall show you my laboratory. There we have them all—all the trypanosomes, all the filariæ. Funny leetle fellows to cause so much trouble and make a pesthouse of Africa, eh, gentlemen?"

Matt made a gesture of impatience as the door closed behind him. "He's got too much imagination for a doctor!" he ejaculated.

The professor's chuckle echoed along the corridor.

The attack subsided suddenly for each of them before noon. Rather shaky, but feeling fairly fit, they dressed and went downstairs.

"I'm sick of this place," said Matt. "If we're going, we'd better get away before the next attack comes on. It can't be worse in the jungle than here."

They strode over to the principal store, a stone structure at the corner of the Square, once a government residence, and set about the purchase of their supplies, consisting, among other things, of a tent, canned foods, and firearms—a shotgun and a .450 Martini rifle. Each of them owned a capable revolver. From the storekeeper they learned the address of two native agents who might supply them with bearers.

But when they visited them they discovered that neither of the two agents could offer the slightest assistance. The first, a surly Portuguese, appeared unwilling even to discuss the matter. All the labor, he said curtly, was in the cocoa plantations.

"SIX men are all we need," said Matt. "Four would do at a pinch. And it is less than a week's journey."

"It might as well be a thousand miles," answered the second agent, a French creole. "None of these boys will go within a day's march of San Rocal. I don't know why. And, anyway, they won't hire themselves to strangers."

He seemed to know more than he admitted. And Matt was sure he knew why. But Novo Redondo, after plying them with sly questions, had developed an unnatural lack of interest in their affairs.

Matt and Carter tried interviewing one or two of the natives who loafed about the Square, waiting to be hired. It was the same. They were all, apparently, working; and, at the mention of San Rocal, they all but bolted.

It was evident that Dom Emilio's hand was at work; and yet the natives' fear seemed, so far as Matt could judge, to be of something besides. The mention of San Rocal did evoke exclamations of terror from them.

"It must be the sleeping sickness," suggested Carter.

"I doubt it," answered Matt. "They don't seem afraid of it in Novo Redondo."

That was true. The native population, yellows and blacks alike, seemed to possess no feelings of any sort in regard to the trailing gangs of repatriated wretches whose bones had already begun to whiten the road thru the jungle—that long, northward road, which, like a river, was made up of innumerable tributaries in the form of bush trails rising thousands of miles away in unknown villages.

By nightfall Matt was in despair. Human labor was the only possible way of conveying goods thru the bush. The bite of the tsetse, which conveyed the sleeping sickness to human beings, was invariably the cause of the fatal "nagana" in horses, oxen and donkeys. One or two scrubby horses did exist in Novo Redondo, either because they had made the extremely rare recovery, and so were "salted," or because they were stable-reared, and never taken far enough from the town to risk encountering the deadly trypanosome carrier; but these, of course, could be had at no price.

"We'll have to abandon the trip," said Carter, as they retired to the veranda to smoke and rest at sundown.

"Or hump our own loads," suggested Matt.

They were smoking and talking it over half an hour later when the Professor rode up on Dom Emilio's horse. He dismounted, tied the beast, and came up beaming.

"Well, I have found him, gentlemen," he chuckled. "He is one of the filariae, as I suspected, and is transmitted exclusively by the culex fastigans, one of the mosquito tribe. One of the malarias—but he took the stain badly, and I cannot be positive which one. However, it is not the sleeping sickness, Mr. Carter—positively! Only the tsetse can transmit that, and not to the white save exceptionally. Keep right on with the quinine, gentlemen. I am in great haste, or I should ask permission to remain and smoke a cigar with you; but I promise you that you shall see my laboratory, and witness your little enemy in bouillon—ja!"

CHAPTER VI.

A SLIGHT recrudescence of fever the following morning left them both shivering, but it was mainly an aftermath of the day before. A greater worry was the labor difficulty.

"I'm not going to be beaten by Dom Emilio," said Carter. "And I'm going to find out why he doesn't want us in San Rocal. What's your opinion, Matt?"

Matt shrugged his shoulders. "I've got too many to choose from," he answered.

"What are we going to do?"

That they debated the greater part of the afternoon, and they were still at it when Da Costa appeared before them.

"I hear you gentlemen want porters for to go to San Rocal," he said. "I can get porters for you. As many as you want, gentlemen."

"Then why in the dickens can't we?" asked Carter.

Da Costa sniggered. "You got to know how," he answered. "These men here are afraid of you. They think you come from English government and get them into trouble. They're an ignorant lot. I can get you as many as you like. How long you want them for?"

"Three weeks, maybe," said Matt. "And I think four porters will be enough."

"Well, Senhor, I can get you four men at ten milreis a month each. Good men I guarantee."

The price was insignificant enough. But the two were sceptical of Da Costa.

"What do you and Nadeau get out of this?" asked Matt.

Da Costa looked shocked. "Senhor, I do you a service, that is all. You are strangers——"

"And so you're going to take us in, eh? Well, I'll take you at your word, Da Costa. When can you have them here?"

"Tomorrow at 6, if you like, gentlemen," responded the little Portuguese. "The head man is Joseph, a very good, experienced man. You will have no trouble with him. His pay will be fifteen thousand reis."

The bargain was struck, and Da Costa departed with the air of one who has completed a transaction of high finance. Neither Matt nor Carter altogether liked this development. They walked out toward the cocoa plantations, discussing it.

"It's Dom Emilio, of course," said Carter. "I suppose he sees we're bent on going, and so wants to do the next best thing he can to stopping us—keeping tab on us thru this man Joseph. But Da Costa must have known that we saw thru his game."

"Of course," said Matt.

"That's what I don't like about it. It's so transparent. We're walking into whatever trap Dom Emilio's setting for us, simply because it happens to be the only way to walk. And it won't increase his regard for us——"

"D—n him, what about it?" demanded Matt truculently.

"Or that of our natives."

"See here! You heard what Da Costa let out about the natives thinking that we are from the British government?" asked Matt. "That comes straight from Dom Emilio. That's the secret of our troubles with the labor agents."

"Dom Emilio won't stop at much, but I don't think he'll dare play any tricks with us," said Carter.

"We'll be on the watch, any way. I suppose we'll have to do guard at night by turns, but that won't be any great hardship, if we take things easy."

"I don't like dragging you into this, tho," said Carter. "It was different when I asked you."

"Shucks!" retorted the American.

THEY had passed the little overgrown path leading to the plantation, and were about to return to the hotel. The

The Men Had Flung Their Loads to the Ground, and Were Chattering Together. At the Sight of Matt and Carter They Hesitated, and Then, With Howls of Terror, Fled.

sun had just set, and it was growing dark as suddenly as in the tropics. Of a sudden Carter caught sight of a figure lurking among the trees.

There was something in its attitude that gave him quick suspicion. He swung toward it, and it started at his movement and came forward, resolving itself into Maria D'Vaz.

She went close to Carter, fixing her dark gray eyes on his. "I must speak to you and your friend," she said in a low voice. "It is what I wanted to say. It is hard after that night. And my guardian and Nadeau watch me. But it must be said. I hear you start for San Rocal in the early morning."

"Quick work of Nadeau's," said Matt, at Carter's side.

The girl paid no attention to him, and, seeing this, he withdrew just out of hearing. "I must tell you not to go to San Rocal," she said to Carter. "At any cost—no!"

"Why?"

"Dom Emilio does not want you to go. He means some harm to you."

"Yes, but, my dear lady, Dom Emilio isn't everybody, is he?"

"Oh, yes, indeed he is—here. There is danger, very grave danger, and of a kind that you would never suspect. They will not have a white man in San Rocal, not even a Portuguese."

"Then there's a new experience in store for them," Carter answered. "So this is what you wanted to say to me the other day? It is kind of you, Senhorita——"

"Please listen to me. Dom Emilio was notified by telegraph the day after your friend bought the concession at the capital. He had not known that it would be sold so soon. He had always meant to get it. You see how much it means to him. You will not go?"

"We shall certainly go."

Alarm grew on her face. "I know that you will never return!" she cried. "There are grave dangers. I do not myself know what they are, but I suspect. I——"

She placed her hands upon his arm, and looked up at him with an expression of intense entreaty.

"If I tell you what I suspect—at whatever cost to me—will you—give up your plans?" she urged.

"No, Senhorita. That is impossible," answered Carter. "You cannot induce us to do so by pointing out the dangers."

"You do not know what Dom Emilio is."

"I know that he is a devil——"

"He is not a devil. Sometimes he is the very soul of kindness to me—not as you saw him the other night. His mind is turned by his sufferings. But he means you no good."

Carter took both her hands in his. "Senhorita D'Vaz," he said, "we both thank you with all our hearts—don't we Matt?" He turned to where his friend was standing, a little distance away, and Matt nodded without looking at them. "And we want to help you. Is there any way in which we can? You cannot remain in Dom Emilio's house, to suffer as you are made to suffer."

"Thank you," she answered. "But there is nothing that you can do for me."

"We can take you away—to another country, if you like. Somewhere where you can forget your life here——"

She looked at him so steadily that he was momentarily confused. "Mr. Carter," she said gravely, "all my past—and future—lie there!"

She pointed along the jungle road that ran toward San Rocal. Carter did not know what to make of her. And, even as he wondered, she had withdrawn her hands and gone.

Carter turned, to see Matt at his side, looking at him with frowning displeasure. Matt shook his head slowly, but said nothing; and, in the shadow of his silent condemnation, Carter trudged back beside him to the hotel. He imagined that he was displeased at his apparent intimacy with the girl, but he was at a loss to understand the cause of it.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN they got back they found the headman, Joseph, awaiting them. He was squatting on the hotel veranda, a tall, lithe negro, with an ebony black skin, but, what is almost unknown in a negro, a high, aquiline nose and thin lips like a Caucausian's. The man's appearance was extraordinarily unattractive; there was a sinister squint in the cross-eyes, whose muscles seemed to have become wasted, for the eyeballs rolled around in the man's head like those of a mechanical doll.

However, Joseph's appearance was the worst thing against him, on evidence. He spoke English, and assured them that they could make the journey to San Rocal in five days. He would be ready at 6 o'clock the next morning.

At dawn Matt and Carter found the porters lined up before the hotel, where the headman squatted in charge of the boxes. Each man picked up his piece and placed it on his head, and the procession filed out and thru the street of Novo Redondo, Carter and Matt leading, and the bearers straggling away behind.

A short distance beyond the town they found themselves in the primeval jungle. The narrow path, remnant of a once splendid road, which now lay beneath several feet of accumulated soil and forest debris, ran between gigantic tree trunks interlaced with creepers. Where a tree had fallen the indolent natives had simply made a path around it, so that the track wound in and out among the tall ferns and thorny undergrowth.

At first the jungle was full of noises, the screeching of flocks of parrots at their morning feed, the chatter of troops of monkeys in the tree-tops. But as the sun appeared all these sounds died away of the instant. They walked in absolute silence. Hardly a ray of sun straggled down thru the interlacing branches overhead, where a whole world of life dozed in the upper boughs, or peered down silently upon the travelers.

Sometimes the forest cleared, and they came into open, parklike spaces; here the sun was unbearably hot, and they were glad to cross them and come upon the jungle again.

This was a tributary of one of the oldest things of Africa—the great slave road of the Portuguese. Now it was a back-current, bearing upon its breast the shattered human freight that they passed, reeling in the clutches of the sleeping sickness back toward those homes that it would never reach. Overseers, themselves in the first stages of the malady, and all in the absurd pantaloons and tight blouses, with the gluey clothes upon their shoulders, belabored the stragglers with frenzied blows that had no force in them and awakened no sensation.

Not five miles out of Novo Redondo Matt and Carter came upon the first backwater in this stream.

The first sign was three huge vultures, too gorged to rise, which, fluttering helplessly toward them, drew them aside into the jungle, where the victims had dragged themselves to sleep their last sleep. Some had torn off their clothing, but most slumbered peacefully in their clown-like clothes; they lay in a circle; some just animate, most dead; and, hopping about among them, or gravely perched upon the bodies of those whose last breath was nearly due, were the great carrion birds.

They showed the sight to Joseph, who came up in advance of the bearers. "Is that why the boys are afraid to go to San Rocal?" Matt asked.

"Oh, no, sah," answered Joseph. "They don't mind for to die. They 'fraid for to live, sah!"

"What do you mean?" demanded Matt.

Joseph could not, or would not explain. Carter and Matt were completely mystified.

"I think he's wiser than he pretends," said Carter.

"I don't," Matt answered. "I don't believe Dom Emilio would entrust many secrets to Joseph. It's my idea he's nothing but the decoy. When we see evidence of mischief, then will be the time to call Joseph to order. Murder is too big a game for blacks to be permitted to play on white men."

"I wasn't thinking of murder," answered Carter.

They camped that night in a cleared place in the jungle, keeping watch by turns. On the next morning Carter had a slight touch of fever again, but Matt felt better than ever. They passed another circle of dead men, this time clean-picked skeletons, so that the vultures, which had investigated and fed, soared like flies in the sky and showed no inquisitiveness. These were the repatriates from the last boat but one. Joseph looked at the sight and burst into laughter.

"Dios, what d—n fools!" he muttered.

Matt and Carter went on in disgust, leaving him chuckling over the dead. Whatever his private joke might be, it was certainly a gruesome one.

TOWARD noon the path broadened into a road again, the jungle dropped away, and the travelers entered a fairly populous native district not far from the sea. The lofty San Rocal hills now began to be seen faintly on the horizon.

They traversed native villages, whose nearness was announced long before they were sighted among the trees by the perpetual sound of Africa—the distant thudding of mallets upon the rubber vines. It sounded like the distant roll of drums, that hammering from every hut, whereby the hardened sap is extracted thru the pulverized wood fibers. But before Matt and Carter came within sight of the settlements there was an exodus into the bush. Sometimes they saw the black head of a frightened fugitive, but never near them.

"What do you suppose scares these people?" Carter asked. "They are not forced to bring in rubber, as in the Congo."

"My answer's still the same," Matt answered. "Too many ideas to know which one to choose."

They stopped to fill their water bags at a small native store, kept by a half-breed Portuguese.

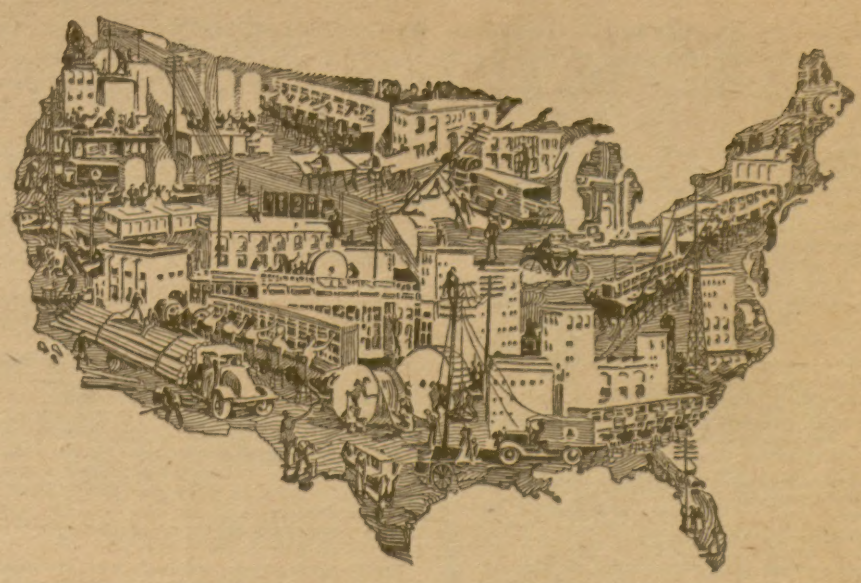
"Where do you go, Senhores?" asked the little storekeeper; and, when Matt told him, he crossed himself rapidly.

"What's the trouble?" Mat demanded.

The storekeeper smiled feebly. "Ah, Senhor, doubtless you know why you are going there," he answered.

When they had gone on a little distance they looked back and saw the storekeeper in conversation with Joseph, and pointing after them.

It was evident that there was something amiss in San Rocal; the store-



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keeper's manner had become obsequious at the mention of their destination; but they could make nothing of the matter.

Carter's fever seemed to have left him on the third morning. They went on for five days. Once again their road lay thru dense jungle, but the changing character of the vegetation indicated that they were leaving the lowlands behind. And ever the hills of San Rocal grew clearer, changed from blue to brown, and then disclosed great scraps and cactus-covered precipices.

The jungle had covered what had once been a populous district. The tract that they traversed was the stamped foot-path of native women, trodden hard thru years of carrying water-gourds from the streams to their villages. But the villages had been pulled down, and a thick growth of bush concealed the tracings of the cassava fields.

They were in fetish country now. All along the track grotesque faces leered at them, carved into the trunks of living trees; and once they came upon a burial ground, a space in which every tree had been replanted upside down, so that the dried roots stood up stiffly in the air.

Every few miles along the road small parties of the repatriates were to be seen, tottering feebly onward, or sitting by the roadside, their heads sunk on their breasts. But they no longer wore their clown's costumes; every one had reverted to the loincloth.

The scene grew wilder. The road ascended continually, until it seemed to reach the summit of a dividing plateau. Halting here, Matt called to Carter.

"What do you see over there?" he asked.

"Beyond the valley?"

"At the head of the valley."

"It looks like a river flowing into a black lake."

"That's how it looks to me. But water doesn't look like that in sunlight. It's white. It shines. I wish we'd thought of bringing glasses."

"It can't be a huge herd of antelope," Carter suggested.

"It would look dun. Even a herd of elephants looks a grayish dun in the distance. I never saw anything like it before."

"It couldn't be a native village?"

Matt shook his head. "We'd see the huts before the natives. And it wouldn't look like that. I don't know what to make of it."

Something restrained them from asking Joseph. The road dipped down again, running between two heights which gradually ascended until it was a mere canyon at the base of unscalable cliffs. On the sixth morning they estimated that they were no more than ten miles from the ruby-ground.

"Our last march," said Matt, joyously.

"Thank heaven!" said Carter. "Those night watches are too much for me—at least, a week of them."

MATT looked at his friend. Carter's eyes were bloodshot, his face not flushed, but puffy. He put his hand on his wrist; the pulse was steady enough.

"You don't think you're in for another touch of fever?" he asked.

"I don't feel as I did before. But I'll be glad when we get there, that's all."

Matt produced his map, and the two went over it critically.

"This is the road all right," Matt said. "And that mountain must be that great peak in the distance. We should find the stream at the base. We'll try to push the men to make it early in the afternoon."

When they halted at noon they saw the bearers holding a long palaver with Joseph, who presently came up.

"These boys want to know if this is far enough, sah," he said to Matt. "They say this is San Rocal, and nobody never goes no farther."

"Tell them if they make a good march this afternoon that'll be all," answered Matt.

Joseph translated. There was an animated chattering. When Matt and Carter rose the men took up their burdens reluctantly, and resumed their march at a snail's gait. They were evidently afraid.

Matt and Carter walked ahead, carrying the rifle and shotgun, which they never allowed to leave their possession; they wore bandoliers stuffed with cartridges, and carried their pistols in their belts. Each had a sense that the critical moment was at hand. If Dom Emilio meditated any evil, it should be disclosed before night found them settled upon the ruby ground. By early afternoon they had reached the base of the high mountain.

This was the place, clearly indicated upon the map. The concession was about five acres in extent, but it might as well have embraced the whole valley, for evidently no one else had staked out a claim there. The site consisted of a pebbly shale, the old bed of a stream, which trickled, much diminished in volume, out of the mountain side.

A coarse grass grew sparsely along its banks, but apart from this there was no vegetation in the valley, which grilled, white as bones under the burning sun. The ravine was here no more than 200 feet across, with almost perpendicular cliffs on either side of it, their bases bare as the valley, with stiff cactus growths projecting from their fissures perhaps a hundred feet above the ground, and on the summit, the thorny shrubs of the uplands.

"Look!" said Matt, pointing.

At the foot of a cliff was a cave, part natural, partly built out by stones. Scraps of tin cans, and fragments of a rusted cooking-pot lay in front of it, and the bones of animal refuse. Inside was a canvas sack, which had contained flour, long since devoured by rodents.

At the back of the shallow cave were the remnants of a straw mattress, and a blanket, both pulled to shreds and tatters.

"D'Vaz left in a hurry," mused Carter. "I wonder whether Dom Emilio followed him and killed him here."

"Hardly! He said that the torture, whatever it was, was to begin all over again. D'Vaz must be alive, then."

There certainly were no signs of human remains. There were traces of D'Vaz's workings in the river bed—great heaps of stones flung up in a long pile. They found also the shaft of the worker's pick.

Suddenly Matt clutched at Carter's arm and pointed into the debris.

Dully gleaming among the disintegrated flints and pebbles were two large rubies.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEXT moment he had flung a handful of pebbles over them, concealing them from sight.

"No need to let our friend Joseph in on this," he said. "We'll make our camp a mile down the valley, and spend a day or two investigating this alone."

Carter nodded wearily, and sat down. Matt glanced at him critically.

"Cheer up, John!" he said. "It's no use getting the sleeping-sickness here, you know. I'd have to carry you back to Novo Redondo to get our friend Von Schwerin to inject his—what does he call it?—atoxyl."

Carter did not answer. He sat with his legs outstretched, his head sunk on his breast, in horrible imitation of the repatriates along the road.

For an instant the sight froze Matt's blood. Then the American shook Carter gently by the arm, and Carter got up.

"Sorry, Matt," he said. "That fever's taken it out of me quite a bit, I fancy. Let's go back—what's that you were saying? Yes, we'll run this job alone. Let's pitch our camp further back."

Ten minutes later they came upon their porters. The men had flung their loads to the ground, and were chattering together. At the sight of Matt and Carter they hesitated, and then, with howls of terror, fled.

Matt ran after them, yelling to Joseph, but the headman was nowhere to be seen. When he stopped, breathless, the last of the band was out of sight.

And he knew enough of native ways to know that they would hardly stop until they reached Novo Redondo.

He went back to Carter, to find him sitting apathetically upon the ground.

"Natives have bolted," he announced laconically. "Not much likelihood of their coming back, I'm afraid. However, we can carry back enough food for the return journey."

Carter nodded. The news did not seem to interest him. Matt, after casting another glance at him, got the tent up. Then he laid out their blankets and brewed a cup of tea. Carter seemed better after drinking it.

"You'd better have a good night's rest," said Matt. "Lie down now, and I'll get the supper ready presently. I'm going back a little way to see if that scoundrel Joseph is planning an ambuscade."

He filled his revolver and started off, shaking his head. He knew little of sleeping-sickness, which was not endemic in that part of Africa, but had been taken from the Congo to the Guinea Islands by the slaves, and by them brought to Angola. The tsetse, before it fed upon the sick, had been innocuous to man. And, despite Carter's apathy, he did not believe that he was suffering from it.

As Von Schwerin had said, the disease hardly ever attacked white men; when it attacked even negroes, the period of incubation was infinitely longer, in general. Carter must have been over-taxing himself after his first attack of fever.

Matt went for about a mile down the valley, scrutinizing the ground carefully. He satisfied himself that Joseph was not lurking near the camp. There was nowhere he could be hiding. The valley was perfectly open, and the cliff perpendicular.

Nevertheless, he went on for a half mile further before returning. He would have to keep awake that night, of course. But in the morning Carter would undoubtedly be better. Thank God they had brought the quinine!

The sun was setting when he returned to the test. He looked in, saw Carter asleep, as he thought, and set about preparing the supper. He filled the cooking-pot at the stream and made a fire of dry cactus fallen from the cliff above. Then he set out the plates with the hardtack, and opened a can of bully-beef. Finally he went to the tent entrance and called his friend.

There was no answer. Going in, he discovered, to his horror, that Carter was not under the blankets.

He went to the door and yelled. There was not the least response. Carter had disappeared from sight in the open valley.

Suddenly remembering D'Vaz's cave, Matt ran to it, but a single glance within showed him that it was empty.

There was only one way that Carter could have taken, and that was toward the narrow part of the valley beyond. Matt set off at a quick gait in search of him.

THE sun had set, and darkness would be a matter of only a few minutes. Already the sides of the ravine were growing indistinct in the shadows. Matt broke into a run, but he no longer shouted, either because some instinct warned him of danger, or because the echoes of his voice sounded too eerie in the gloom. He was still confident that Carter, who must have wandered off in his delirium, was not far ahead of him.

The ravine was growing narrower. The cliffs were not more than fifty feet apart. Suddenly Matt saw the end of the valley before him. It was a bulwark of thorn and cactus, which had grown up on a bed of sand, no doubt deposited there at the bend of the canyon by the steady west winds of the Atlantic, not far away.

From the top of this low elevation, perhaps not more than a score of feet above the level of the valley, Matt thought he would have a better chance of discerning Carter, if he were anywhere in the vicinity. He scrambled up, with some difficulty, for the sand was loose underfoot. Presently, however, he saw a well-defined trail thru the scrub, where the sand had been trodden down to a firm consistency. He took this, and presently came to a small gap in the brush.

Standing there, Matt called again. No answer came. He took a step forward. Of a sudden the whole side of the hill seemed to be sliding down.

He grasped at the thorny shrubs to stay his descent, but the spikes pierced his hands, and he could get no firm hold on them. The cactus prongs penetrated to the bone. Inexorably he went sliding down the far side of the hill, at a pace which constantly accelerated.

Then he lost his footing altogether, and went plunging down a bed of smooth sand into which he dug his hands and feet frantically, without perceptibly decreasing the velocity of his fall.

A moment later he felt smooth, slippery rock beneath him. He went down head over heels, choking with the speed of the never-ending fall, to be brought up on the buffer of a sandbed again.

And he found himself at the bottom of another valley, similar to the last. The same straight cliffs surrounded it, but in the darkness he caught a glimpse of grass and vegetation.

Looking up, he saw that he must have fallen a hundred feet over the edge of a vertical cliff. He could not understand how he had survived the descent.

He raised his voice again, in a furious cry that set the echoes ringing in horrible mockery from cliff to cliff. Again and again he shouted, until the whole place rang with the call of Carter's name, as if an army of imps was deriding him. Once, thru this mocking medley, he fancied that he heard a faint cry in answer. But, tho he renewed his shouts till he was hoarse, he heard no response of which he could be sure.

He set himself to scale the precipice down which he had fallen, but in the darkness he could find no foothold in the limestone wall, which towered vertically everywhere.

The only thing to do was to wait till morning. But for Carter's absence, a night in the valley would have worried him little. But the thought of Carter, wandering helpless in his delirium, the possibility of Joseph lurking near the camp, intent on mischief; above all the sense of an unknown danger, drove Matt on yet again to attempting the impossible.

Matt sat down at the base of the slope and resolved to wait for the dawn.

And, even as he came to this decision, he heard a plunging among the thorns above him, as if some beast of prey were prowling there. Then something came tumbling headlong down the sandy slope almost beside him, lit at his feet, and lay there.

It was Carter! Matt ran to him and gathered him in his arms, expecting to find every bone in his body broken. But Carter stirred drowsily, and then sat up.

"Tnank God!" Matt ejaculated. "John—John, old man!"

Carter murmured feebly: "That you, Matt? I thought—I——" His eyes closed in sleep.

Matt shook him, and after a while Carter opened his eyes again. "I was saying—I thought—I heard you calling me," he whispered. "I—tried to follow. Must have had a tumble, didn't I?"

He fell asleep once more, seated, his back against the slope, his head upon his breast.

Matt felt Carter's pulse. It beat very slowly. He placed his hand upon his forehead. It was as cool as his own. And now he would deceive himself no longer. This was no fever, tho their first attack had been. This was the most virulent form of sleeping sickness, such as overtakes a man in a few hours, and kills in a few weeks, or even days. Such cases are rare enough, even among

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negroes; how had Carter acquired the pest in Novo Redondo?

Matt clinched his fists and swore as illumination came to him.

Von Schwerin, of course! He had not taken to the man, but it had never entered his mind that he would deliberately inoculate them with the devilish disease. And Von Schwerin had sterilized his needles in the flame of a match. But—they were hollow needles, no doubt, designed to gather and hold the drop of blood they drew. With the most elementary sleight of hand Von Schwerin could have passed the point thru the flame without admitting it to the germs of disease within.

And he, too, had been inoculated!

Fearless of all normal danger, Matt became suddenly aware of an intense terror that held him in its spell. Carter's symptoms had been almost immediate, once the onset began; suppose his own stronger constitution enabled him to resist longer, was not the end as sure? Would Von Schwerin have taken chances with the amount that he injected?

And at the thought he was conscious of an immense weariness.

He felt for his revolver. If his suspicions were realized on the morrow, he would not hesitate to choose the more merciful end for both of them.

His belt was empty. He had dropped the weapon in the fall. He felt for Carter's. Carter, of course, had left his belt in the tent; he was clad in nothing but boots, trousers and shirt.

Matt crouched beside his friend, and, with his arm about his shoulders, yielded himself to sleep, dreamless sleep.

The dread hand of disease had clutched at the lives of the young American and the Englishman who had journeyed down into the sinister valley of blackness and slavery.—Read in the coming installment how they fought madly and desperately against the horrible specter of sleeping sickness.

This story began in No. 23, the Ledger for June 5. Back copies may be obtained from our agents or newsdealers.

The Remodeling of a Blonde

YOUNG Mrs. Harpenter sidled into the lighted parlor of the little Oak Park bungalow and deposited her parcels on the chair. Then, with a very sheepish expression, she faced her husband.

"I'm tired to death," she exclaimed, as she glanced at the clock. "I'd no idea a little shopping would take so long."

"Slip off your hat and rest a bit," suggested her lesser half, sympathetically. "Then you can tell me all about it. What took you so long?"

"Oh, no, I mustn't—take off my hat yet, I mean," demurred the young lady, "at least not for a few minutes. Charlie, are you going to be very angry with me?"

"About what?"

Young Mrs. Harpenter drew off her gloves, rolled them into a ball and tossed them into the chair beside the packages. Then she drew a deep breath.

"You know, dear," she began nervously, "I've been needing a shampoo. But I put it off until I exchanged that necktie for you and bought your new collars and some of that horrid cheese you like."

"Your preamble presages something important," interrupted her husband. "What is it—a new hat?"

"Mercy, no, nothing so expensive! So when I finished chasing thru the stores I went into Mme. Yvonnitche's beauty shop, around the corner, to have my hair washed. I was tired and limp from the walking and the long ride on the "L" and she noticed it.

"'I will make the madame oh, so comfortable,' she said. 'And then we will do the hair shampoo in the grand mode, eh?'

"I nodded and leaned back in the chair. Madame's fingers were soothing and the room was warm and I—I'm afraid I dozed. Anyway, madame asked me a lot of questions and I don't remember just what I did answer. I came back to life when she had finished, and jumped!

"Then I thought of what you'd say when I came home and I wanted to cry. Perhaps you'll leave me——"

"For heaven's sake, why?" asked Mr. Harpenter. "This suspense is awful. Take off your hat."

"N-not yet. You see, I began thinking you'd leave me and then I'd be left all, all alone in the world, because you always did like my hair just as it was, and once when I said I'd bob it——"

"Babe!" thundered her husband. "You mean——"

"N-no, nothing as bad as that. But I thought of myself all, all alone in the world, just because of a mistake of a fool hairdresser, and I gave Mme. Yvonnitche a good piece of my mind and started home.

"Every time I'd arrive at the doorway I'd shiver. And then I'd walk around the block again and try to figure out some way of keeping you from being too angry. Once I came all the way up the steps and then I saw you in the parlor, reading the paper and scowling so fiercely that I fled. Finally I decided to tell you all about it—just as it really happened. Charlie—you won't be angry?"

Charlie rose to his full height.

"Take off your hat this instant!" he commanded.

The protecting covering came off like a flash.

"Henna!" said young Mr. Harpenter, grimly.

"I knew it!" wailed his wife as she placed one arm pleadingly around his neck. "I knew it. But it wasn't my fault. I didn't know what madame was doing. I was asleep. And I thought how much you used to talk before we were married about the sunshine in my hair and how pretty it was and how you hated fools who dyed their hair, and I'd 'a' given anything to get the red taken out of it."

Very youthful Mr. Harpenter patted his wife gently on the back.

"There, there, dear; don't take it too seriously to heart," he consoled her. "The color'll fade out, sooner or later."

"But then it goes streaky, Charlie, and you wouldn't want it looking that way. Mme. Yvonnitche says I'll have to keep touching it up from time to time."

"Well——"

"Do you think it looks so homely?"

"Well——"

"I knew it! I knew you wouldn't feel so badly about the accident. Dearest, you're a love! And now I'll go out to the kitchen and prepare supper—something extra nice for my own dear husband."

And young Mrs. Harpenter gathered up her packages and her hat. But before she left she flashed a very satisfied glance at the parlor mantelpiece mirror.

* * *

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The Right Game

BY BARRY SCOBEE

A good loser really wins, but a poor loser always loses—everything! The circus girl won the money fair and square from Seegin—ten thousand dollars for her little sister whom he had ruined. But he was such a poor loser he lost more than the money. This story will prove unforgettable, because you'll read it more than once.

DEAR SIS: I came very near sending you a draft for ten thousand dollars this morning—pay from the Man-Who-Was-Neither-a-Pig-Nor-a-Wolf-But-a-Lot-of-Both. You see, your big sister got into a poker game! So you must pardon her if she just goes and writes the queerest letter ever. I have a lot of jumbled up things in my mind that I've got to get straight, and the only way I know is to write to you.

I got into the game thru a newspaper boy named Sharyland. But let me start back of that. Sharyland is a nut over nude sculpture and beautiful female forms. He does pencil sketches. So, after he saw me swinging up there high over the stage in white tights, he came raving to my dressing-room door begging to sketch me before I changed.

You never saw me in this act, did you, Narrah? Well, yo uwill when I get back, so I'll just say that I must look tempting—because I am strong and firm—and, Oh! I tingle with shame when I see the greedy looks in their eyes down below me.

To get back, the manager had introduced me to this Sharyland, so I let him into my room. Sake of art, you know, as he said. He is a nice chap.

"I've Been Easy," He Grated in My Ear "But Now I'm Going to Be Rougher Than Sandpaper!"

After he had got me down on paper he asked if I would care to go to the club.

"The newspaper men take their wives," said he. "It is respectable."

I agreed to go. And while I am right here let me put in gratis that old Santon has a hospitable gang. We got around a great big table, there at the club, and talked and sipped things. The night slid along on slick rails. A while after 12 some one suggested a nickel-ante game and Sharyland and three others and I slipped off to the poker room, a quiet and sort of isolated place.

The boy Shary staked me, tho I objected. You know I am not a moocher. I guess we had played thirty minues when a man pushed his head in at the door, uninvited.

"Heard you were here," he said in general, tho he kept his piggy eyes straight on me. "Thought I'd inject some coin."

I knew him instanter—Seegin! My little old heart bounced right up to a 2-40 clip and all I could do was to murmur his name. "Oh, you brute," I thought, "how I wish you would drop dead right now." I was sorta afraid. I had red visions of how his steel claws had gripped you and of how his wolf eyes had triumphed. Yes, I knew him, tho the only time I ever saw him, you know, was when I was flaring crazy with wrath—when I struck him with your long shears. There was a little white scar in the middle of his forehead from it. But he didn't know me. I was glad again that my own name wasn't on the program.

He was just like you said—not a pig, because there was too much wolf in his eyes, and not a full yolf because there was too much pig all over him. His waist and the flesh over his eyebrows matched—pig fat. And his fingers, nose and eyes hit it off in a trio—sharp steel.

"Miss Winsom," he said, "I just missed seeing the finest thing in the world by a hair's breadth—a fine silky hair."

"What?" I asked, knowing the stuff he would hand out.

"You!" Lord, how his eyes went thru me. I wanted to use a hatpin, but I had left my lid in the big sitting-room.

"I've been out at some lignite mines that belong to me," he went on, "and got in town twenty minutes before the show. 'New York Nifties,' somebody said, so I beat it to the playhouse. Just in time for your act. Say, you're supple."

'From the Big Town?" I asked

'I've been there—believe me, I've been there! Spend my money in little Ol' Manhattan. Make it out here in the bush. See that?"

He threw down a block of bills in the most impudent way imaginable. Shary

After He Had Got Me Down on Paper He Asked If I Would Care to Go to the Club.

and the others looked disgusted. He slipped off a twenty and asked for it in chips.

"We're playing two dollars a stack," one of the others explained.

"I'll donate twenty. Newsboys'll need it—if they can get it. Ten thousand in that bale, Baby. Too late for the bank. Had a notion to toss it up to you when you were swingin' high up there in those skin-tights."

We got to playing with him in. I soon saw my luck was running sort of funny. First two or three good hands that made the chips simply pickings. Then some hands as empty as my purse has been the last two years.

IT WAS just fun and fooling along at first and a lot of joshing back and forth. Sharyland is clever on the dialogue stuff. I kept building up my chip-chimneys a little higher and pretty soon something happened. I cleaned the table. Got every cent. Of course, I invited the gang out to have a sup of something, like the good winner always does. We walked down the little hall to the main room. It was deserted, whish caused me to inquire the time—1:30, to my surprise. The buffet was down in a distant corner. After the glasses tinkled properly I tried to get away, but Seegin said something mean, and being winner I had to stick to give them a chance to get their money back. But I didn't want to; the Pig was acting nasty and I didn't care for trouble. To tell the truth, Narrah, I was creepy of him and his steel claws.

We took out five dollar stacks this time, except Seegin, who must have his twenty again. And so to show off he slapped the loaf of funds upon the table as he had before. Something blazed within me all of a sudden. In a flash I had an idea—if my luck would hold. It was you needing the money and the little home and something one of the boys had whispered to me when Seegin was guzzling at the buffet that got together in my mind and exploded.

The news fellow had told me that the ten thousand was the entire size of Seegin. He'd lost in a Mexican filibustering venture and had had his entire pile out that day trying to buy options on some lignite and oil land. The fact made my game so much the better, if it would work.

Luck clung to me like a good friend and I cleaned up again! Shary and the others were for leaving, but Seegin suggested a moonlight "motor drift" for, not the crowd, but him and me.

"Monseur Seegin," I said sweetly, "you and I are the moneyed chaps now. Of course we can't think of going. We're going to play poker now—real, old-fashioned poker, aren't we?"

You see, I was after all his money. The crowd caught on and sat up. The Wolf, looking at me, experienced a curdling of the soul. He wanted to save himself from my luck, but he couldn't back down, not with the news men there to tell it on him.

"I'll mix it with you," he said, studying me, "under one consideration."

"Name it."

"That you and I play here alone."

I hadn't expected that. I had meant for the crowd to stay to egg him into my trap. And I don't know why I did what I did—except that I had one of my hunches, and you know the trouble they have gotten me into. But I had a hunch this was the right game. Then, too, the money was still in my mind, and your need of it. I agreed to play alone with him. The news men got out, leaving with that funny air a man has when a woman is in the position of dismissing him. I felt ashamed, after they had been so nice. But Shary lingered; naturally, too, since he had escorted me there.

"Mr. Sharyland," I smiled at him, "you're tired and won't care to stay here until I leave, so I release you now."

He shook his head, stubborn. "I'm not going to leave you alone, Miss Winsom. There's no one else in the club. Even the buffet-boy has left."

I looked at Seegin helplessly. He began gathering up the money.

"Alone or not at all," he snapped

"Mr. Sharyland," I appealed desperately, "you can please me best by going. You're a good fellow—but good-by."

I held out my hand. Did he take it? He did not. He stood and looked at me hard, then went out with a chilly good evening, tho he did not look back at me once, from the hall.

"Now," Seegin began insinuatingly, "we're ready for the motor drift under the moonbeams out to Red Horse Tavern, aren't we, Winsomy?" It was just as if he thought I had sent Sharyland away to be rid of him.

"Seegin," I hinted broadly, "I am here to play cards."

"All right," he retorted, "a-a-a-ll right. We'll play here until—until the last dog in town is asleep."

"We shall play until I get all the money," I shot back.

"Take it now," he suggested, pushing the stack toward me, "and let's talk things over."

"I'll take," I said, "just what I win in a fair game."

He smiled indulgently. He bet with-

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out a care whether he won or not. He met every raise I made. He was toying with me like a cat miffs a poor little mouse about, but I didn't understand that then. I was simply puzzled why he was so free in letting me win.

As we played I kept wondering how I could get away from him after the game. My roving eyes caught a pinochle board—you know the kind, one of those wooden blocks full of little holes where the counting pegs are stuck—lying on a broad couch in a corner of the room. It made me feel a little easier.

IN A surprisingly short time I had half the money, judging by the size of his stack and mine. I wanted to get away. I was afraid. But I remembered you again—and an angel or a devil stirred in my heart. I had meant all along to win by straight poker, but of a sudden——

"I'll draw cards with you for the ten thousand," I challenged, "high card to win the pile."

He looked at me, and the wolf was in his face. "Anything to kill time," he said, and got to his feet. I saw his intention instantly, but he beat me to it. He strode in two steps to the door and locked it, pocketing the key and holding me off with one of his steel arms. Of course, he tried to jolly me about it, but I wasn't jolly at all, for next thing he pulled down the shades.

Wasn't I in a pickle, Snookins? I was scared stiff. I knew how you must have felt at times. He looked at me, the fool, and flashed a grin like Satan's

"Seegin," I threatened, vibrating with wrath, "I may kill you."

He laughed.

I scattered the cards out and told him to draw, the highest to take the ten thousand. We fished out a card apiece. My hand trembled, and to save me I couldn't get up the nerve to turn the card over for a look. But Seegin, without a care, flipped his over. It was an eight spot. Some one told me once that in drawing this way if my opponent got an eight I had three chances of tying him and equal chances of drawing a higher or lower card.

"Listen, Seegin," I suggested, my voice very low somehow. "Think about New York a minute. Then remember a girl there——"

"Which one?" he smirked.

"A girl there whose health you broke, whose life you hurt, whose very soul you crushed and flung away."

"What about it?" he asked listlessly.

"Seegin, I am going out of here tonight with this money, all of it, to pay her with, pay her just a little mite of what you owe." I was breathing hard. "I am going out if a miracle has to happen."

He shrugged—with his hands and his shoulders and lips.

Breathless, now I reached out to turn my card over. I had a little trouble, my fingers shook so, but at last I gave it a flip and it came down face up. It was the king of spades—the death card, to me. The ten thousand was mine by rights, but with a mean laugh he began to gather it over to him.

"Fun's over," he informed

"Drop my money," I cried, a bit wildly, I suspect.

He raised his brows. "What? You didn't think I was giving you this, did you? Why, I was fooling along for things to get quiet—for the last dog to get to sleep."

"The money is mine — and I'm that girl's sister—my name is Bryant."

"Eh?" He was startled. "Narrah's sister?" He was silent a minute while he raised a long white forefinger and touched the little glossy scar in the middle of his forehead. "So much the better, beautiful baby, that you are Narrah's sister."

Footsteps sounded somewhere on a pavement. He cocked his ears to listen, then began to gather up the money, putting one hundred dollar bills in one stack, fifties in another, and so on. I got up and began to walk back and forth, watching him. Then, Sis, I decided on something else. I felt that it was the right game, somehow. I stooped over the couch, snatched up the pinochle board, and whirling, struck him across the knuckles.

"You hussy!" he spat.

I started a scream, but his fingers darted to my throat and cut me off. He grasped one of my wrists, then my waist, and pulled me up to him. He was so quick!

"I've been easy," he grated in my ear, "but now I am going to be rougher than sandpaper."

In trying to scream I was only making choking, gurgling noises. I knocked a chair over. We struggled into the table.

Then something else happened. It was the boom of a revolver. With a crash like the bursting of the world the door flew open.

Both Seegin and I were bent forward over the table, me twisting. From my position I could just see the mouth of a black pistol. Suddenly there was a blast of a shot from it, and Seegin's grip loosened. He sprawled over his arms and the scattered money and I fell backward to the floor.

A hand lifted me up and I staggered, dizzy, to the door. Then I looked around to see Sharyland standing there with a pistol and looking at me.

"Let us go," he said quietly, and put an arm about my shoulders.

We started back for a second. Seegin was sprawled out over the table, one knee upon a chair, blood pouring from a blotch in his left temple and flowing out over the banknotes.

So all I can send you, Narrah, is the news of his death. I left the money there, bloody and wicked, and went away with Shary.

* * *

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All who will may work.
There's a haystack in the fiel'
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Don't try to run the place

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"No, my husband's legs," replied Mrs Rapp. "He had heard the noise before it woke me."

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To watch the chaffinch build his nest
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I love to lie upon the grass
Beneath a silent sky,
And watch the white and lazy clouds
Go slowly floating by.

I love to gaze far out to sea
Across the stretch of blue
And listen to the morning wind
Tell tales both old and new.

But best of all I love the woods,
Whose silence seems to hold
Within its utmost leafy depths
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The Extra Ounce

(Continued From Page 4)

A gray ghastly dawn was breaking over Destruction, bleak, bitter and brush-infested and reeking with that inalienable loneliness that is a very part of isolated islands of the sea.

He staggered to his feet, and headed toward the nearest building. A man came out, looked around and challenged him.

"Hello there—what are you doing here at this time in the morning?" he called out in his heavy voice. "Gotum canoe down on beach—all the same sleep in whale-camp?"

"No, she's stuck on that reef out there—I swam ashore," Jake chattered.

"Oh, a white man—I thought you was a Siwash. You came from the office, didn't you—got the mail aboard—and the grub?" the fellow rambled on without giving Jake a chance to put a word in edgewise.

"Mail nothing; I swam ashore when my boat sank," the manufacturer said as soon as the lightkeeper paused to take a breath.

"Oh, I see? A shipwrecked man—I see. Have to write up a report about it and send it into the office."

"Report h—l!" Jake roared. "What I want is some dry clothes and something to eat—and a place to sleep."

"Yes—yes, I was getting around to that. Dry clothes furnished—and supplies given to destitute castaway—only there ain't any suppplies to give. But the book says we got to save life and property when there's a wreck—did you say you had any property out there to save?"

"If there is—you are welcome to what you can find," Jake was beginning to get ugly.

"Oh we never take anything—it's against the rules—got to account for everything. No, thank you, stranger—I won't take a red cent of your money—even if I did save your life! But you might write a letter to the superintendent—and tell him all I did for you—and they might report it to Washington, and I'd get my name in the Bulletin. Dick Briars, keeper of Destruction Island Light risks his life to save man who was shipwrecked near his station—saved valuable property—gave food, clothing and comfort to the entire crew—how many is there of you, Captain?"

"JUST me," Jake said, weakly. "I was the only survivor of the good ship Blue Jay, wrecked on the reefs of Destruction. Now if it's all the same to you, guess I'll take a little of that comfort you was speaking about—you can put it in the report later."

He started toward the nearest building. He was wet, cold and miserable, and almost desperate enough to fight this crazy keeper of Destruction.

"You can't go in there!" Dick Briars yelled at him. "That is the fog signal—and you'd get the floor all dirty with your wet feet. I'll take you up to my quarters. We can go in thru the basement—and I'll get you dried up a bit before we go upstairs."

So Jake Crane followed the lightkeeper up thru the bushes to the top of the hill, where three pointed-roofed and ancient looking buildings stood lonely and silent in the gray light of the dam.

"I suppose the rest of the keepers are sleeping?" Jake ventured a question, and inwardly he was hoping they were not all like this sample he had seen.

"There ain't any rest," the fellow said sadly. "Jim Thomas, the first assistant, went ashore on his vacation—and then the new third assistant went and jumped over the bluff and broke his neck—and Pete Olson, the second assistant, he got cold feet and quit—built a big smoke on the end of the island, and the Siwashes saw the signal, and came over and took him ashore."

"Must have been having a bad run of luck?" Jake had to say something.

"You see, Pete believed in ghosts. We buried Bob out there in the turnip patch, and Pete swore he used to see him walking around nights, feeling of his neck, as tho it hurt him. He wanted me to go dig him up and straighten that twisted neck, so his soul could rest in peace."

"He probably imagined it?" the manufacturer suggested.

"Of course, he imagined it. I sat out there on his grave all one night, waiting for him to come—and never saw a thing of him. I tell you lightkeepers don't prowl around nights after they are dead. They get enough of night work while they are living—and are glad to go to sleep like regular folks, as soon as they are dead. When you have been in the service as long as I have you'll understand what it means to get a chance to sleep nights."

"I NEVER could keep awake nights," Jake said sadly, as he thought of his launch out there on the reef.

"You'll have to learn to keep awake—we all have to learn when we come to Destruction. It'll come a bit hard at first—but you'll make a good assistant when I get you broke in—you know I'm the best man in the service for breaking in assistants—that's why they always send their new men to Destruction. But don't go and do same as Bob did—jump off the bluff and break your neck!"

"I'll take care of my neck," Jake said with a show of confidence that he did not feel.

"I'm glad you came—it got sort of lonesome out here after they all left. I used to sit out there in the turnip-patch nights, talking to Bob—but he couldn't talk back. So that didn't help much. I'd left, too—but somebody had to stay and write the reports.

By this time Jake had been taken into the basement, and rigged out with dry clothing. "Got anything to eat?" he asked.

"I'm just about out of my regular supplies," the fellow hesitated. "That's what made Bob go and jump over the bluff. And that stingy Pete went and traded his grub to the Siwashes, for taking him off the Island. But we won't starve. There's some canned goods I bought up for the winter—haven't opened them up yet—but it's the best in the market—and cheap."

The experience which the manufacturer had gone thru since he ate his supper, had put him in need of food. Already he could feel the shiver of exhaustion running up and down his legs. It was difficult for him to curb his impatience as the lightkeeper poked up his fire, and got things ready for the meal. He thought the best way to kill time would be to take a nap. As he dozed off he heard the squeaking protest of a packing case being torn open, and it made his mouth fairly water for the good things Dick Briars had laid in for the winter.

"We'll have to cook you in a kettle—the directions say to serve you hot," the voice of the keeper seemed miles away, as Jake drifted off down the river of sleep.

"There you are, Ole—a supper fit for a king." The lighthouse man was shaking him out of his nap. His hungry eyes took in the table at a glance. In the center was a heap of sea-biscuit that looked as tho they ought to have been pensioned off years ago—and two plates heaped with steaming stew. But hungry as he was, Jake Crane made no motion to get up from his chair.

Like one fascinated he sat there and stared at the corner of the table, where an empty can mocked him with its gaudy label—a label that once had looked good to Jacob Crane. It was the famous Extra Ounce Stew that the publishers had boycotted!

A GUILTY fear almost overpowered the man from Portland. But he was a game old rooster. Sliding his chair up to the table, he reached for one of the venerable sea-biscuits—and dipped his spoon into the stew.

Jake shut his eyes and gulped that first mouthful without breathing. It wasn't half bad—why, he had swallowed medicine that tasted a lot worse than that! The keeper had gone out to take in the light. The old man sat there alone, wrestling with stewed sealion until he had disposed of the entire seventeen ounces—then he was ready for bed.

He awoke with the screech of the foghorn in his ears. He opened the window and looked out upon a world of gray desolation, dripping under a mushy Pacific Ocean mist. It was an eerie scene. Already the first shadows of evening were beginning to creep in thru the gloom, and Jake Crane decided that even the crazy keeper was better than no company at all. He went down to the signal to hunt him up.

"Pretty time of day to turn out, ain't it?" Dick Briar snarled at him. "Might as well have a wooden man as you? Pity them fellows down at the office didn't have to put up with assistants like you—sending graybeards out here all the time?"

Jake backed away from the crazy keeper; but that wild-eyed individual followed him up, brandishing a wad of greasy waste in his face while he laid the law down to him.

"I tell you Destruction Island ain't no soldiers' home—it's a workhouse is what it is—intended for young men—and even they don't last long. Bob jumped over the bluff to get away from it. Now get busy and wipe up the grease around here, while I go and light up. Tomorrow I'll show you how to do the work in the tower."

With that he lurched out of the door, and old Jake let him go without a word of protest. He saw that the warped brain of Dick Briars had forgotten all about the circumstances which had brought him to Destruction Island—and had firmly fastened itself to the assumed fact that Jake was a man they had sent him from the office—a new assistant, and one too old to suit his fancy.

It was a half hour before the keeper returned, Jake had the floor all wiped up, and the lamps lit in the engine-room. In fact if he had been a real assistant, afraid of losing his job, he couldn't have done any better, for the man from

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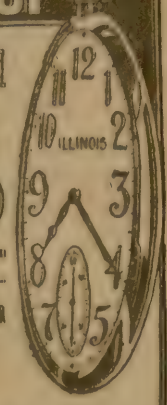

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Portland had no desire to rub mad Dick Briars the wrong way!

The big man looked critically about him, and a thin, ghostly smile of approval fluttered over his drawn lips. "Now see if you can do as good a job cooking supper?"

JAKE'S heart sank within him. Their supper would consist of Extra Ounce Stew and ancient sea-biscuits, as it would until the lighthouse tender came and brought new supplies—or took them the manufacturer's nerves.

What little they had was ready when the keeper returned from the fog signal. He moved up to the table and filled his mouth to overflowing with the hot stew. "Is this the best you can do?" he snorted as he spit the stuff on the floor. "Ain't fit for a hog to eat!"

"It's just as it came out of the can—you can't blame me if you went and bought stew that wasn't any good."

"That's right, Ole—that's right." The keeper picked up one of the cans and stared long and thoughtfully at it, as tho he didn't intend to forget it very soon. "Now you wouldn't think that a fatherly looking old man like that would go and cook up a mess like this, and feed it to an honest lightkeeper, now would you? But you are not to blame, Ole—it's that fellow on the can that's to blame—and some day I'm going to find him—and kill him."

Dick Briar returned to his detested supper. Jake watched him, as that look of murderous hate deepened in the man's mad eyes. What if he should recognize his new assistant as the man on the can?

The manufacturer tried to turn the talk into other channels, but still Dick Briars' thoughts hung to the unholy stew that he had eaten. "I'm glad Bob didn't live to get a mouthful of that dope—he sure would have haunted us if he had died with his belly full of stewed sealion!"

He glanced out of the window. "It's clearing up already," he laughed. "I'll go down and stop the signal—and turn in for a little sleep. You can call me at midnight, Ole."

He did as he said. A half hour later he was snoring lustily in his bed and Jake Crane was in charge of the station. One of the first things he did, as assistant keeper of Destruction Island lightstation, was to overhaul that case of Extra Ounce Stew, and strip every wrapper off the can. Crazy Dick wasn't going to have any more pictures to help him recognize the man who fed him sealion.

"It was a close squeak, Jakey, old boy," he told himself as he watched the wrappers flaming up in the kitchen range. "But you kept your head—and we'll pull out of this thing yet."

He went down to the signal and fixed up the fire. It was less lonely there than it was at the quarters with the crazy keeper; but it was bad enough. A wind had risen, and the surf was beginning its sullen drumming at the base of the cliffs. The building shook and shivered each time one of those big waves came dashing in against the rocks. The windows rattled ominously, and got upon the manufacturer's nerves.

HE WENT outside; out where the blue-black island-night held dominion over all. The rays of light that poured out of the two dozen bull's-eyes of the big lens, looked like the legs of some giant spider, sloping down to the earth at an angle of 45 degrees. Around and around they went in their tireless waltz; twenty-four legs of Destruction, dancing in the wild night's glee.

A flock of petrels had come in from the sea, and were whirling about the light, sounding their thin, whining cries as they beat their frail bodies to pieces against the plate-glass windows, and fell with squawking, fluttering agony upon the ground.

Midnight came none too soon for Jake. He went up and called the keeper, and crawled off to his own bed. He fell asleep still thinking of the clever move he had made in destroying the incriminating evidence of the beef-stew wrappers.

The next morning he was up early. Being of a practical turn of mind, Jake realized that his safety demanded that he keep Crazy Dick in good humor. He was an old man all right; but he was going to be a mighty good assistant while he stayed at Destruction.

As soon as he had kindled the fire in the range, he went to sweeping out. He stepped into the keeper's bedroom, and received the shock of his turbulent old life.

There upon the wall was the six-foot poster of the Extra Ounce Stew. Dick must have had a weakness for glaring colors, for he had tacked it up over his bed, where he could admire it without getting up.

There was nothing to do but destroy it. Jake stepped over and tore it down.

The next minute there was a heavy step behind him, and Dick Briars, the mad keeper of Destruction, was upon him, shaking him like a rat.

"What you mean tearing down my pictures?" he roared as he pummeled the old man about the room. "If I even as much as catch you looking in that door again—I'll break every bone in your body."

JAKE escaped at last. He crawled away, bruised in body and beaten in soul. He left the lunatic in there talking to the picture.

"A fine-looking old gentleman you be—ain't you? But you won't look so pretty when I get thru with you. Get me to stock up on sealion for the winter will you? Just wait till I get down to Portland and hunt you up! I'll not forget that face of yours if I live to be a hundred."

Jake left him there with his mirthless monologue. Well he knew that sooner or later Crazy Dick was going to connect him with that man in the poster—what then?

At breakfast that morning the keeper sat staring at him across the table. At last he blurted out: "Say—where did I see you before? Was you one of my assistants at Tatoosh Island—or was it Tillamook Rock? I know I've seen you somewhere before—now just where was it?"

"Tatoosh Island," Jake ventured in a small voice that suddenly had lost its grip upon the world.

"Tatoosh—was it? Now would you be Tom or Bill—or was it Hank?"

"Tom, of course," once more Jake lied in the blind hope that he had said the right thing.

But the words seemed to set Dick Briars on fire. He leaned across the table, and lifted his gnarled fist as tho he was going to destroy his puny assistant on the spot. "So you came back again, did you, Tom—suppose you thought I had forgotten all about that pair of shoes you stole?"

Jake saw that he had blundered. He was skating on very thin ice; and would have to keep going or it would break with him.

"I was just fooling—to see if you would remember me—I'm Hank."

"Remember you—guess I do remember you!" the keeper roared as he reached across the table and grabbed the old man by the collar, and dragged him out into the middle of the floor, and began working him over by hand. "You dirty little runt—go and peddle lies about me to the superintendent, will you? I've killed assistants for less than that!"

Jake was tempted to change his name again. Bill still remained—but there was no telling what awful thing Bill might have been guilty of. He was getting a bit suspicious about the sort of lives the lightkeepers and their assistants lived. So he told the truth.

"I never was with you at Tatoosh or the Rock—never been your assistant before—never even saw you before I came to Destruction Island." Jake howled between kicks.

"Don't tell any of your lies to me!" Crazy Dick roared at him. "I know I've seen you somewhere—and hated you. I remember that much all right—I hated you, and was going to kill you for something. Perhaps you was somebody who sold me some rotten grub or something like that? I'll remember presently who you are—and when I do——"

JAKE had an inspiration. "Wasn't that the tender whistling?" he gasped.

The keeper dropped him as tho he had been red hot. Instinctively he began patting his uniform into shape—then he went crazy again— crazy like a fox

"There's them plate-glasses—the petrels were out last night—and we forgot to clean up this morning. Get two buckets of cold water—I'll fix the suds," and for the moment the identity of the new assistant was forgotten.

Jake found himself trudging along behind the keeper, with a pail of water in each hand. When the reached the foot of the tower Dick stopped and looked up thoughtfully.

"Consider the birds of the air: how they toil not, neither do they spin—but verily, verily I say unto you—a petrel shall not fall, but the lightkeepers must pay the price."

So saying, he led the way up the winding stairs, and cut thru the door, and upon the slippery balcony—to pay the price of the petrel's fall. The fear of death was in Jake Crane's blood, but the mad eyes of the keeper bored into his very soul, and he dare not refuse to follow.

With his feet upon the rickety railing and his back braced against the thin air of the heights, the unwilling assistant scrubbed plate-glass till his fingers ached, and his teeth rattled with fear. He thought he was doing something clever, when he yelled about the tender coming; and this was what he got for it. He would rather be down there on solid

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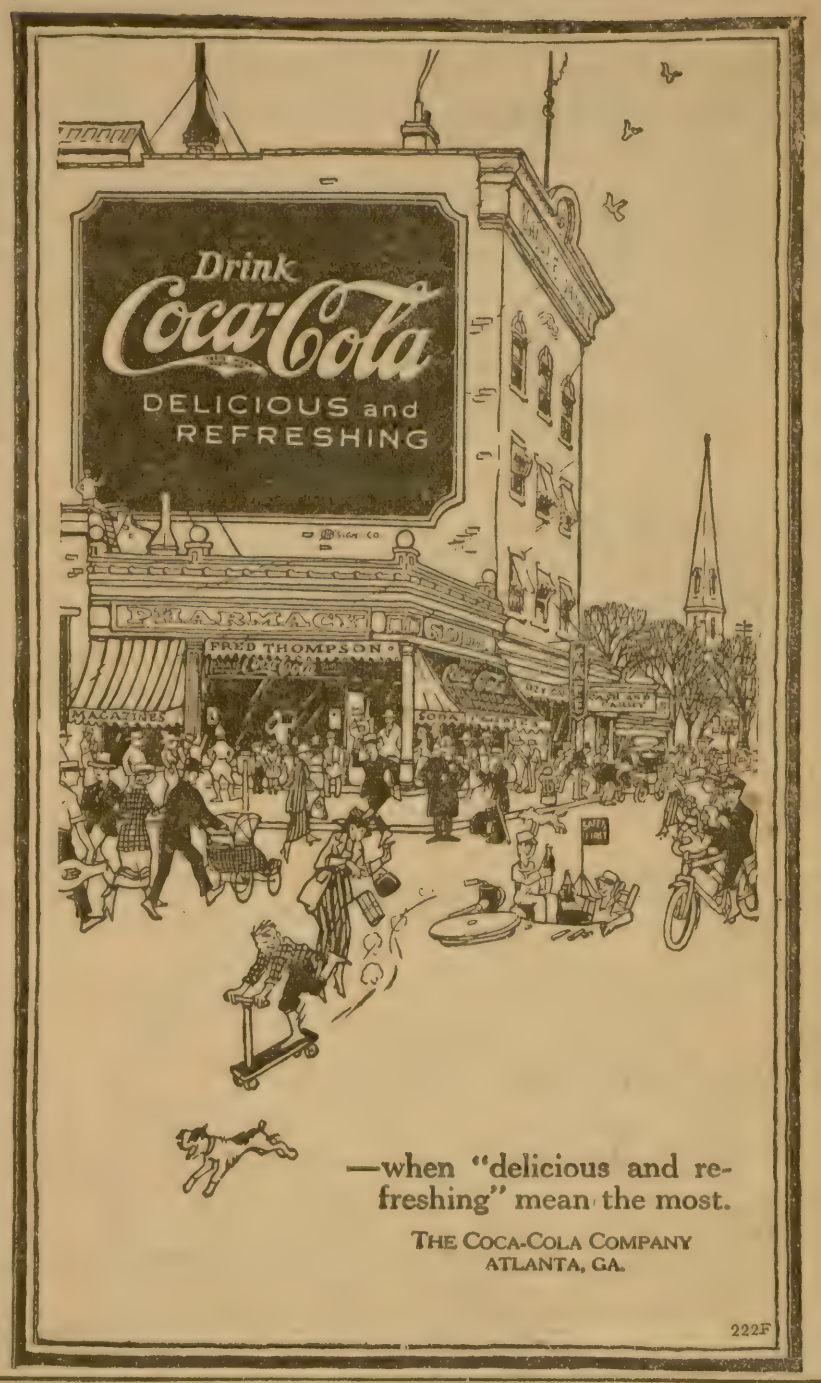

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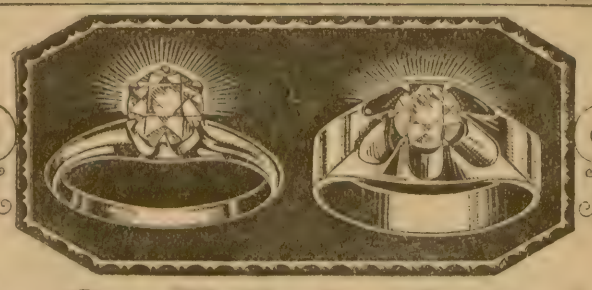

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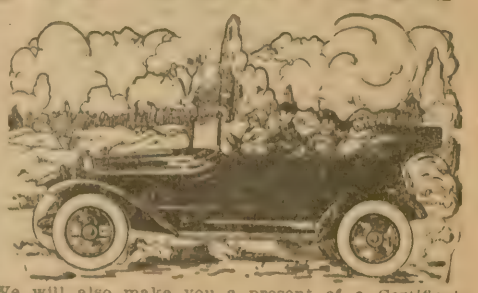

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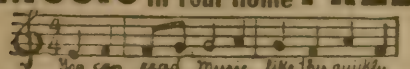

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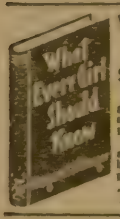

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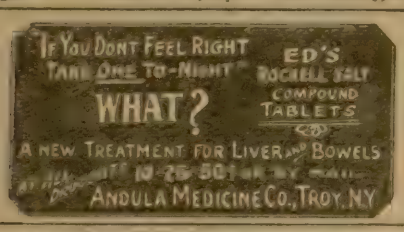
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ground: if there were a whole flock of Crazy Dicks jumping on him.

That afternoon Jake took a look at himself in the mirror, to see what damage Dick had done to him. That moment he got another inspiration.

"Just the idea—I'll grow a beard. He won't recognize me then," and the manufacturer went away chuckling. He paused and rubbed his bristly chin, and wondered if there was anything on Destruction Island that would make hair grow—quick.

He watched his chance when Dick was out, and rummaged thru the medicine chest in hopes of finding some hair tonic. But the best he could do was to locate a jar of petroleum jelly, which, according to the label, was supposed to be good for dandruff and falling hair.

Jake looked at it dubiously, and thought he would take a chance. It was old and rancid, and by the time he had succeeded in buttering his face with it, he was a sight to behold—and smell.

"A fat lot I care how it looks—it's better than having that big devil fingering my windpipe," Jake decided as he scanned himself in the glass. He was almost happy, but it didn't last long.

CRAZY DICK came stamping in, glanced sharply at his assistant and snorted, "A pretty looking thing you be! What if the superintendent would come and see you—don't you know enough to wash yourself?"

"My face was all sunburned." Lies were coming natural to Jake.

"Sunburn at this time of the year?" Dick scoffed. "It's them whiskers—why don't you shave? On page fifteen of instruction to lightkeepers you will find it says: 'Untidiness in dress, or uncleanliness in person, will be a subject for disciplinary measures, and you are neither clean nor tidy.'"

"I'll fix up before the superintendent comes," Jake promised as he edged away toward the kitchen door.

"No you don't," Crazy Dick roared at him. "You get that dirt washed off your face. I'm going to shave you—and make you all pretty for inspection."

"Ah, leave me be—I tell you my face is sore," Jake hedged.

"It's be sorer if you don't get a wiggle on and do as I say," the keeper said savagely as he took down a huge machete of a razor and began honing it on a leather strop.

Jake got a wiggle on.

Dick Briars never had been intended for a barber. He made his lather off the same bar of soap the Government furnished to scrub floors; and his razor was fashioned on the generous lines of a Kansas cornknife. But he got the whiskers off his assistant's face.

Jake wiggled and squirmed as the torture progressed. "You're skinning me instead of giving me a shave!" he groaned.

"You do look a bit red," Crazy Dick admitted, as he stepped back and inspected his job. "A bit red—and—say who be you any way? You're somebody I know quite well. Now let's see—somebody I know—that red face looks familiar all right—I'll get you in a minute now."

Jake felt his grip on life slipping. That hellish poster in the bedroom was done in red ink; and after the skinning operation he had undergone, the resemblance must be perfect. Even Dick Briars, crazy as he was, must see the truth now.

He did see—great God—what was he going to do?

THE huge hand tightened upon his shoulder, and that cutlass of a razor was making sinister circles about his head. The keeper's eyes were like two burning coals—and Jake couldn't think of another lie to tell to save his soul.

He felt the strength oozing out of his streaming pores, and closed his eyes to shut out the sight of that deadly blade.

Jacob Crane had refused to be beaten that day in Portland when the publishers refused to run his ad. He had whipped up an army of billposters, and flung his extra ounce stew at the world in spite of them. It had even reached this little island out here in the wash of the Pacific tides—and out here in the maniac-infested solitudes of Destruction Jacob Crane would have to pay the price.

Then over the beating of his heart, he heard it; the rolling rumble of a steamer's whistle, blowing the station call.

The grip upon his shoulder was slackened. Jake opened his eyes and found that he was alone. Hastily he cleaned up the slop that the amateur barber had made.

The keeper came out, spick and span in a brand new uniform. He was smiling. For the moment he was in his right mind.

"I didn't get that report made out after all, but I'll get it in on the next month's mail," he grinned as they went down to the boat landing.

The superintendent came ashore in the surfboat and proceeded to inspect the station. As he poked his head into the keeper's bedroom he broke into an undignified laugh.

"So you fell for that extra ounce of stew, did you? How did you like it?"

"Didn't get to it yet," Dick Briars thought he was telling the truth. "But if you hadn't come with the supplies when you did—I'd have been forced to break it out—I was saving it for the winter."

"Throw it over the bluff—and forget about it," the superintendent advised.

"Is it as bad as all that?"

"Bad?" the man from the office snorted as thu he himself might have fallen for that extra ounce; and the taste still lingered in his mouth. "It was so bad that the International Billposters fired the Portland Local out of the union for handling it . . . and now they're suing the company for damages. The food inspector has condemned the entire output—and there is an injunction against the fellow—so he can't make any more."

Then he whipped back to official business.

"What did you say the name of that man was who got wrecked on the reef?"

"I don't think I ever asked him—he was just here a minute ago." Dick's voice held a note of doubt in it.

Jake Crane didn't wait to hear any more. He ducked out of the back door and legged it for the boat landing anxious to get aboard the tender before any more questions were asked.

* * *

Cheap Money.

"I HEARD a wise crack today," began the elevator man. "A fellow came in and says that $10 now is only as good as $5 used to be."

"Did you just find that out?" asked the elevator starter. "Have you been doing a Rip Van Winkle the last few years? I'll say that ten is no better than two and a half or less; it depends on how and where you spend your ten.

"Last night I was out with a young lady friend and what I did to ten was a shame. It faded away like a snowflake on a hot stove.

"For instance, I bought two theater tickets and paid $5 without the war tax. Can you imagine how I enjoyed the show after that? I tried to forget myself and laugh at the comedy, but every time I did I felt a pang that took the joy out of the show for me.

"After the show I wanted to do the right thing in the entertainment line, so I suggested that we go to a restaurant revue. There I was further wised up as to what the power of a dollar isn't. In order to keep up with the new ideas on the high cost of living they have what they call a cover charge, which means that you pay so much for simply sitting at a table.

"And then we began to order. Brother, then's when the shock comes. I held on to the edge of the table to brace myself every time the waiter asked what we'd have. I tried to look pleasant and make believe I was having a good time, but when I thought of what the check might be I felt kind of hysterical.

"All kinds of wild ideas, like young nightmares, came into my head. I wondered if I could leave my watch and pin with the cashier.

"And still, the young lady I was with must have been used to the high cost of happiness nowadays. She had the time of her life. She laughed and she joked and enjoyed herself immensely—as I used to in the good old days when currency was more elastic.

"After I got home I started to figure it out. It has been my idea all my life to marry Elinore and settle down in a little home in the suburbs, which I would buy out of my savings. But I don't think it can be done now. Elinore must have a good time while she's young, she says. Therefore, to be able to win Elinore I must show her the said good time and pass up the little home idea."

"Can't you stave off your courtin' till next year?" asked the elevator man. "Maybe by that time the cost of living will be more reasonable."

"Maybe," responded the starter, "but Elinore won't."

* * *

He Had.

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"I knew of one poet, greatly in vogue in Paris some years ago, who was not exactly a fluent dispenser of epigram. He was invited to the house of a great lady of the Faubourg St. Germain, and as soon as he entered he became the center of a circle of admirers, who waited vainly for some subtle or poetic conceit. The poet remained silent, ill at ease, red in the face and uneasy of feet.

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"'Have you observed—duckess,' he faltered, desperately, 'that—this—this—year's pawn tickets are pink?'"

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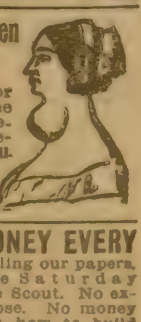

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CROOKED TRAILS AND STRAIGHT.

(Continued From Page 7.)

I'll run back to the kitchen and look at the pies in the oven."

Curly swung from the saddle, and tossed the bridle rein to the ground. He followed her into the house. She was taking an apple pie from the oven, but took time to be saucy over her shoulder.

"I'm not allowed to invite you into the house, sir."

"Anything in the by-laws about me inviting myself in?"

"No, that wasn't mentioned."

"Anything in them about you meeting one of the lads from the horse ranch up on the hillside where it is neutral ground?"

"Did Sam come with you?" she cried.

"Who said anything about Sam?"

Glints of excitement danced in the brown pupils of her eyes. "He's here. Oh, I know he's here."

"What do I get for bringing good news?"

"I didn't say it was good news."

"So! Your big eyes are shouting it."

"Was that the news from the horse ranch?"

"That's part of it, but there is more. Sam and Curly are on their way to Saguache to spend the Fourth of July. Sam is going for another reason, but I'm not sure yet what it is."

"You mean——?"

"There's something doing I don't savez, some big deal on foot that's not on the level. Sam is in it upto the hocks. To throw me off the scent they fixed up a quarrel among them. Sam is supposed to be quitting Soapy's outfit for good. But I know better."

White to the lips, she faced him bravely. "What sort of trouble is he leading Sam into?"

"I've got a kind of notion. But it won't bear talking about yet. Don't you worry, little girl. I'm going to stand by Sam. And don't tell him what I've told you, unless you want to spoil my chance of helping him."

"I won't," she promised; then added, with quick eagerness: "Maybe I can help you. I'm going down to Saguache to visit on the fourth. I'm to be there two weeks."

"I'll look you up. Trouble is that Sam is h—l bent on ruining himself. Seems to think Soapy is his best friend. If we could show him different things might work out all right."

While she climbed the hill to Sam, Curly watered his horse and smoked a cigarette. He was not hired to chaperone lovers. Therefore, it took him three-quarters of an hour to reach the scrub pine belt on the edge of the park.

AT ONCE he saw that they had been having a quarrel. The girl's eyes were red, and she was still dabbing at them with her handkerchief when he came whistling along. Sam looked discouraged, but stubborn. Very plainly they had been disagreeing about his line of conduct.

The two young men took the trail again. The moroseness of Sam was real and not affected this time. He had flared up because the girl could not let him alone about his friendship for Soapy Stone. In his heart the boy knew he was wrong, that he was moving fast in the wrong direction. But his pride would neither let him confess it or go back on his word to the men with whom he had been living.

About noon the next day they reached Saguache. After they had eaten, Curly strolled off by himself to the depot.

"Gimme a ticket to Tin Cup for this evening. I want to go by the express," he told the agent.

The man looked at him and grinned. "I saw you at Mesa in the bucking broncho doing last year, didn't I?"

"Maybe you did and maybe you didn't. Why?"

"You certainly stay with the bad bronchs to a fare-you-well. If I'd been judge you'd a-had first place, Mr. Flandrau."

"Much obliged. And now you've identified me sufficient, how about that ticket?"

"I was coming to that. Sure you can get a ticket. Good on any train. You're so darned active, maybe you could get off Number 4 when she is fogging along sixty miles per. But most folks couldn't, not with any comfort."

"Meaning that the Flyer doesn't stop?"

"Not at Tin Cup."

"Have to take the afternoon train then"

"I reckon." He punched a ticket and shoved it thru the window toward Curly. "Sixty-five cents, please."

Flandrau paid for and pocketed the ticket he did not intend to use. He had found out what he wanted to know. The express did not stop at Tin Cup. Why, then, had Soapy marked the time of its arrival there? He was beginning to guess the reason. But he would have to do more than guess.

Curly walked back to the business section from the depot. Already the town was gay with banners in preparation for the Fourth. On the program were broncho-busting, roping, Indian dances, races, and other frontier events. Already visitors were gathering for the festivities. Saguache, wide open for the occasion, was already brisk with an assorted population of many races. Mexicans, Chinese, Indians of various tribes brushed shoulders with miners, turists and cattlemen. Inside the saloons faro, chuckaluck and roulette attracted their devotees.

Flandrau sauntered back to the hotel on the lookout for Sam. He was not there, but waiting for him was a boy with a note for the gentleman in No. 311.

"Kid looking for you," the clerk called to the cow-puncher.

"Are you Mr. Soapy Stone's friend, the one just down from Dead Cow Creek?" asked the boy.

Taken as a whole, the answer was open to debate. But Curly nodded and took the note.

This was what he read:

> Sam, come to Chalkeye's place soon as you get this. There we will talk over the business.
>
> YOU KNOW WHO.

Tho he did not know who, Curly thought he could give a pretty good

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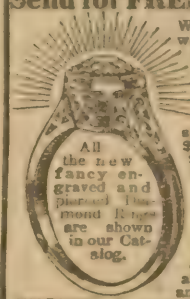

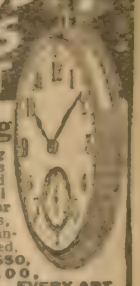

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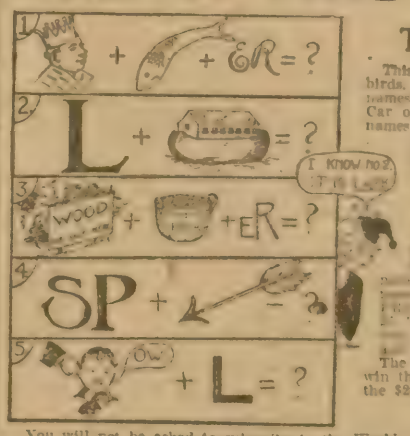

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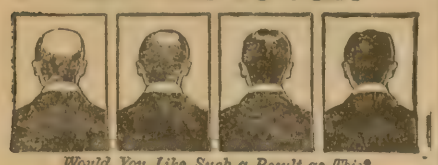

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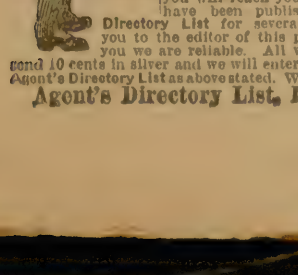

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guess both as to the author and the business that needed talking over.

Thru the open door of the hotel he saw Sam approaching. Quickly he sealed the flap of the envelope again, and held it pressed against his fingers while he waited.

"A letter for you, Sam."

Cullison tore open the envelope and read the note.

"A friend of mine has come to town and wants to see me," he explained.

To help out his bluff, Curly sprang the feeble-minded jest on him. "Blonde or brunette?"

"I'm no lady's man." Sam protested, content to let the other follow a wrong scent.

"Sure not. It never is a lady," Flandrau called after him as he departed.

But Sam had no more than turned the corner before Curly was out of a side door and cutting thru an alley toward Chalkeye's place. Reaching the back door of the saloon, he opened it a few inches and peered in. A minute later Sam opened the front screen and asked a question of the man in the apron. The bartender gave a jerk of his thumb. Sam walked toward the rear and turned in at the second private booth.

Curly slipped forward quietly, and passed unobserved into the third stall. The wall which divided one room from another was of pine boarding and did not reach the ceiling. As the eavesdropper slid to a seat a phonograph in front began the Merry Widow waltz. Noiselessly Flandrau stood on the cushioned bench with his ear close to the top of the dividing wall. He could hear a murmur of voices but could not make out a word. The record on the instrument wheezed to silence, but immediately a rag-time tune followed.

Presently the music died away. Flattened against the wall, his attention strained to the utmost, Curly began to catch words and phrases of the low-voiced speakers in the next compartment. His position was perilous in the extreme, but he would not leave now until he had found out what he wanted to know.

CHAPTER IX.
EAVESDROPPING.

OUT of the murmur of voices came one that Curly recognized as that of Soapy Stone, alias You Know Who.

"—— then you'll take the 9:57, Sam ——"

After more whispering, "Yep, soon as you hear the first shot —— cover the passengers ——"

The listener lost what followed. Once he thought he heard the name Tin Cup, but he could not be sure. Presently another fragment drifted to him. "—— make our getaway and cache the plunder ——"

The phonograph lifted up its voice again. This time it was "I Love a Lassie." Before the song was finished there came the sound of shuffling feet. One of the men in the next stall was leaving. Curly could not tell which one, nor did he dare look over the top of the partition to find out. He was playing safe. This adventure had caught him so unexpectedly that he had not found time to run back to his room for his six-gun. What would happen to him if he were caught listening was not a matter of doubt. Soapy would pump lead into him till he quick kicking, slap a saddle on a broncho, and light out for the Sonora line.

As the phonograph finished unexpectedly—some one had evidently interrupted the record—the fragment of a sentence seemed to jump at Curly.

"—— so the kid will get his in the row."

It was the voice of Soapy, raised slightly to make itself heard above the music.

"Take care," another voice replied, and Flandrau would have sworn that this belonged to Blackwell.

Stone, who had been sitting on the other side of the table, moved close to the paroled convict. Between him and Curly there was only the thickness of a plank. The young man was afraid that the knocking of his heart could be heard.

"—— don't like it," Blackwell was objecting sullenly.

"Makes it safe for us. Besides"—Stone's voice grated like steel rasping steel, every word distinct tho very low—"I swore to pay off Luck Cullison, and by God! I'm going to do it."

"Some one will hear you if you ain't careful," the convict protested anxiously.

"Don't be an old woman, Lute."

"—— if you can do it safe. I owe Luck Cullison much as you do, but——"

Again they fell to whispers. The next word that came to Curly clearly was his own name. But it was quite a minute before he gathered what they were saying.

"Luck Cullison went his bail. I learnt it this mo'ning."

"The son-of-a-gun! It's a cinch he's a spy. And me wanting you to let him in so's he could hold the sack instead of Sam."

"Knew it wouldn't do, Lute. He's smart as a whip."

"Reckon he knows anything?"

"No. Can't"

"If I thought he did——"

"Keep your shirt on, Lute. He don't know a thing. And you get revenge on him all right. Sam will run with him and his friends while he's here. Consequence is, when they find the kid where we leave him they'll sure guess Curly for one of his pardners. Tell you his ticket is good as bought to Yuma. He's a horse thief. Why shouldn't he be a train robber, too? That's how a jury will argue."

Blackwell grumbled something under his breath.

Stone's voice grated harshly. "Me, too. If he crosses my trail I'm liable to spoil his hide before court meets. No man alive can play me for a sucker and throw me down. Not Soapy Stone."

Once more the voices ran together indistinctly. It was not till Blackwell suggested that they go get a drink that Curly understood anything more of what was being said.

The outlaws passed out of the little room and strolled forward to the bar.

Curly had heard more than he had expected to. Moreover, as he congratulated himself, his luck had stood up fine. Nobody in the sunburnt territory felt happier than he did that minute when he struck the good fresh air of the alley and knew that he had won thru his hazardous adventure alive.

The first thing that Flandrau did was to walk toward the outskirts of the town where he could think it out by himself. But in this little old planet events do not always occur as a man plans them. Before he reached Arroyo street Curly came plump against his old range-mate Slats Davis.

The assistant foreman of the Hashknife nodded as he passed. He had helped Curly escape less than a month before, but he did not intend to stay friendly with a rustler.

FLANDRAU caught him by the arm. "Hello, Slats You're the man I want."

"I'm pretty busy today," Davis answered stiffly.

"Forget it. This is more important."

"Well?"

"Come along and take a walk. I got something to tell you."

"Can't you tell it here?"

"I ain't going to, anyhow. Come along. I ain't got smallpox."

Reluctantly Davis fell in beside him. "All right. Cut it short. I've got to see a man."

"He'll have to wait." Curly could not help chuckling to himself at the evident embarrassment of the other. The impish impulse to "devil" him had its way. "You're a man of experience, Slats. Ever hold up a train?"

The foreman showed plainly his disgust at this foolishness. "Haven't you sense enough ever to be serious, Curly? You're not a kid any more. In age you're a grown man. But how do you act? Talk like that don't do you any good. You're in trouble good and deep. Folks have got their eyes on you. Now is the time to show them you have quit all that hell raising you have been so busy at."

"He sure is going good this mo'ning," Curly drawled confidentially to the scenery. "You would never guess, would you, that him and me had raised that crop in couples?"

"That's all right, too. I'm no sky pilot. But I know when to quit. Seemingly you don't. I hear you've been up at Stone's horse ranch. I want to tell you that won't do you any good if it gets out."

"Never was satisfied till I had rounded up all the trouble in sight. That's why I mentioned this train robbery. Some of my friends are aiming to hold up one shortly. If you'd like to get in I'll say a good word for you."

Davis threw at him a look that drenched like ice water. "I expect you and me are traveling different trails these days, Curly. You don't mean it of course, but the point is I'm not going to joke with you along that line. Understand?"

"Wrong guess, old hoss. I do mean it."

Davis stopped in his tracks. "Then you've said too much to me. We'll part right here."

"It takes two to agree to that, Slats."

"That's where you're wrong. One is enough. We used to be good friends, but those days are past. None of us can keep a man from being a durned fool if he wants to be one. Nor a scoundrel. You've got the bit in your teeth and I reckon you'll go till there is a smash. But you better understand this. When you choose Soapy Smith's crowd to run with that cuts me out and other decent folks. If they have sent you here to get me mixed up in their deviltry you go back and tell them there's nothing doing."

"Won't have a thing to do with them. Is that it?"

"Not till the call comes for citizens to get together and run them out of the country. Or to put them behind bars. Or to string them to a cottonwood. Then I'll be on the job."

He stood there quiet and easy, the look in his steady eyes piercing Curly's ironic smile as a summer sun does mackerel clouds in a clear sky. Not many men would have had the courage to send that message to Soapy and his outfit. For Stone was not only a man killer, but a mean one at that. Since he had come back from the penitentiary he had been lying pretty low, but he brought down from the old days a record that chilled the blood.

Curly sloughed his foolishness and came to the point.

"You're on, Slats. I'm making that call to you now."

The eyes of the two men fastened. Those of Flandrau had quit dancing and were steady as the sun in a blue sky. Surprise, doubt, wonder, relief filled in turn the face of the other man.

"I'm listening, Curly."

His friend told him the whole story from the beginning, just as he had been used to do in the old days. And Davis heard it without a word, taking the tale in quietly with a grim look settling on his face.

"So he aims to play traitor to young Cullison. The thing is damnable."

"He means to shut Sam's mouth for good and all. That is what he has been playing for from the start, to get even

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with Luck. He and his gang will get away with the haul and they will leave Sam dead on the scene of the hold-up. There will be some shooting, and it will be figured the boy was hit by one of the train crew. Nothing could be easier."

"If it worked out right."

"Couldn't help working out right. That's why Soapy didn't let me in on the proposition. To get rid of one would be no great trouble, but two—well, that's different. Besides, I could tell he was not sure of me. Now he aims to put me on the stand and prove by me that Sam and he had a quarrel and parted company mighty sore at each other hardly a week before the hold-up. He'll have an alibi too to show he couldn't have been in it. You'll see."

"You wouldn't think a white man could take a revenge like that on his enemy. It's an awful thing to do in cold blood."

"SOAPY is no white man. He's a wolf. See how slick his scheme is. At one flip of the cards he kills the kid and dams his reputation. He scores Cullison and he snuffs out Sam, who had had the luck to win the girl Soapy fancies. The boy gets his and the girl is shown she can't love another man than Stone."

"Ever hear the story of French Dan?" asked Slats.

"Not to know the right of it."

"Soapy and Dan trained together in them days and went thru a lot of meanness as side pardners. One day the Arivaca stage was held up by two men and the driver killed. In the scrap one of the men had his mask torn off. It was French Dan. Well, the outlaw had been too d—d busy. Folks woke up and the hills were sprinkled with posses. They ran the fellows down and hunted them from place to place. Two—three times they almost nailed them. Shots were exchanged. A horse of one of the fugities was killed and they could not get another. Finally one dark night the outlaws were surrounded. The posse lay down in the zacaton and waited for morning. In the night one of them heard a faint sound like the popping of a cork. When mo'ning broke the hunters crept forward thru the thick grass. Guess what they found."

Curly's answer was prompt. "Gimme a harder one. There were two men and only one horse. The only chance was to slip thru the line before day arrived. My guess is that they found French Dan with a little round hole in his skull—and that the bullet making it had gone in from behind. My guess also is that the posse didn't find the horse and the other man, just a trail thru the zacaton back into the hills."

"Go to the head of the class. There was one man too many in that thicket for the horse. French Dan's pardner was afraid they might not agree about who was to have the bronch for a swift getaway. So he took no chances. There's only one man alive today can swear that Soapy was the man with French Dan lying in the zacaton. And he'll never tell, because he pumped the bullet into his friend. But one thing is sure. Soapy disappeared from Arizona for nearly two years. You can pick any reason you like for his going. That is the one I choose."

"Same here. And the man that would shoot one partner in the back would shoot another if he had good reasons. By his way of it Soapy has reasons a-plenty."

"I'm satisfied that is his game. Question is how to block it. Will you go to the sheriff?".

"No. Bolt would fall down on it. First off, he would not believe the story because I'm a rustler myself. Soapy and his friends voted for Bolt. He would go to them, listen to their story, prove part of it by me, and turn them loose for lack of evidence. Sam would go back to Dead Cow with them, and Stone would weave another web for the kid."

"You've got it about right," Slats admitted. "How about warning Sam?"

"No use. He would go straight to Soapy with it, and his dear friend would persuade him it was just a yarn cooked up to get him to throw down the only genuwine straight-up pal he ever had."

"Cullison then?"

"You're getting warm. I've had that notion myself. The point is, would he be willing to wait and let Soapy play his hand out till we called?"

"You would have to guarantee his boy would be safe meanwhile."

"Two of us would have to watch him day and night without Sam knowing it."

"Count me in."

"This is where we hit heavy traveling, Slats. For we don't know when the thing is going to be pulled off."

"We'll have to be ready. That's all."

"Happen to know whether Dick Maloney is here for the show?"

"Saw him this mo'ning. Luck is here too, him and his girl."

"Good. We've got to have a talk with them, and it has to be on the q. t. You go back to town and find Dick. Tell him to meet us at the Del Mar, where Luck always puts up. Find out the number of Cullison's room and make an appointment. I'll be on El Molino street all mo'ning off and on. When you find out pass me without stopping, but tell me when we are to meet and just where."

Curly gave Slats a quarter of an hour before sauntering back to town. As he was passing the Silver Dollar saloon a voice called him. Stone and Blackwell were standing in the door. Flandrau stopped.

Soapy's deep-set eyes blazed at him. "You didn't tell me it was Luck Cullison went bail for you, Curly."

"You didn't ask me."

"So you and him are thick, are you?"

"I've met him once, if that's being thick. That time I shot him up."

"Funny. And then he went bail for you."

"Yes."

"Now I wonder why."

THE eyes of the man had narrowed to red slits. His head had shot forward on his shoulders as that of a snake does. Curly would have given a good deal just then for the revolver lying on the bed of his room. For it was plain trouble was in sight. The desperado had been drinking heavily and was ready to do murder.

"That's easy to explain, Soapy. I shot him because I was driven to it. He's too much of a man to bear a grudge for what I couldn't help."

"That's it, is it? Does that explain why he dug up good money to turn loose a horse thief?"

"If I told you why, you would not understand."

"Let's hear you try."

"He did it because I was young, just as Sam is; and because he figured that some day Sam might need a friend, too."

"You're a liar. He did it because you promised to sneak up to my ranch and spy on us. That's why he did it."

With the last word his gun jumped into sight. That he was lashing himself into a fury was plain. Presently his rage would end in a tragedy.

Given a chance, Curly would have run for it. But Soapy was a dead shot. Of a sudden the anger in the boy boiled up over the fear. In two jumps he covered the ground and jammed his face close to the cold rim of the blue steel barrel.

"I'm not heeled. Shoot and be d—d, you coward. And with my last breath I'll tell you that you're a liar."

Flandrau had called his bluff, tho he had not meant it as one. A dozen men were in sight and watching. They had heard the young man tell Stone he was not armed. Public opinion would hold him to account if he shot Curly down in cold blood. He hung there undecided, breathing fast, his jaw clamped tightly.

The lad hammered home his defiance. "Drop that gun, you four-flusher, and I'll whale you till you can't stand. Sabe? Call yourself a bad man, do you? Time I'm thru with you there will be one tame wolf crawling back to Dead Cow with its tail between its legs."

The taunt diverted his mind, just as Curly had hoped it would. He thrust the revolver back into the holster and reached for his foe.

Then everybody, hitherto paralyzed by the sight of a deadly weapon, woke up and took a hand. They dragged the two men apart. Curly was thrust into a barber shop on the other side of the street and Stone was dragged back into the Silver Dollar.

In two minutes Flandrau had made himself famous, for he was a marked man. The last words of the struggling desperado had been that he would shoot on sight. Now half a dozen talked at once. Some advised Curly one thing, some another. He must get out of town. He must apologize at once to Stone. He must send a friend and explain.

The young man laughed grimly. "Explain nothing. I've done all the explaining I'm going to. And I'll not leave town either. If Soapy wants me he'll sure find me."

"Don't be foolish, kid. He has got four notches on that gun of his. And he's a dead shot."

The tongues of those about him galloped. Soapy was one of these Billy-the-Kid killers, the only one left from the old days. He could whang away at a quarter with that sawed-off .45 of his and hit it every crack. The sooner Curly understood that no boy would have a chance with him the better it would be. So the talk ran.

"He's got you bluffed to a fare-you-well. You're tame enough to eat out of his hand. Didn't Luck Cullison go into the hills and bring him down all alone?" Flandrau demanded.

"Luck's another wonder. There ain't another man in Arizona could have done it. Leastways no other but Bucky O'Connor."

But Curly was excited, pleased with himself because he had stood up to the bogey man of the Southwest, and too full of strength to be afraid.

Maloney came into the barber shop and grinned at him.

"Hello, son!"

"Hello, Dick!"

"I hear you and Soapy are figuring on setting off some fireworks this Fourth."

It did Curly good to see him standing

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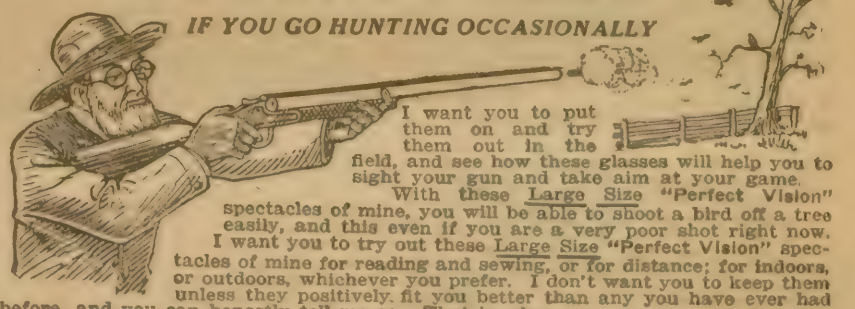

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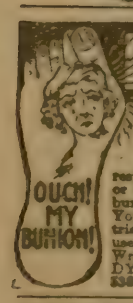

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there so easy and deliberate among the excitable town people.

"Soapy is doing the talking."

"I heard him; happened to be at the Silver Dollar when they dragged him in."

Maloney's eyebrows moved the least bit. His friend understood. Together they passed out of the back door of the shop into an alley. The others stood back and let them go. But their eyes did not leave Curly so long as he was in sight. Until this thing was settled one way or the other the young rustler would be one of the most important men in town. Citizens would defer to him that had never noticed him before. He carried with him a touch of the solemnity that is allowed only the dead or the dying.

Back to the hotel the two ran. When Curly buckled on his revolver and felt it resting comfortably against his thigh he felt a good deal better.

"I've seen Slats Davis," Maloney explained. "He has gone to find Luck, who is now at the Del Mar. At least he was an hour ago."

"Had any talk with Slats?"

"No. He said you'd do the talking."

"I'm to wait for him on El Molino street to learn where I'm to meet Cullison."

"That won't do. You'd make too tempting a target. I'll meet him instead."

THAT suited Curly. He was not hunting trouble just now, even tho he would not run away from it. For he had serious business on hand that could not take care of itself if Soapy should kill him.

Nearly an hour later Maloney appeared again.

"We're to go right over to the Del Mar. Second floor, room 217. You are to go down El Mino to Main, then follow to the hotel, keeping on the right hand side of the street. Slats will happen along the other side of the street and will keep abreast of you. Luck will walk with me behind you. Unless I yell your name don't pay any attention to what is behind you. Soon as we reach the hotel Slats will cross the road and go in by the side door. You will follow him a few steps behind, and we'll bring up the rear casually, as if we hadn't a thing to do with you."

"You're taking a heap of pains, seems to me."

"Want to keep you from getting spoilt till September term of court opens. Didn't I promise Bolt you would show up?"

They moved down the street as arranged. Every time a door opened in front of him, every time a man came out of a store or a saloon, Curly was ready for that lightning lift of the arm followed by a puff of smoke. The news of his coming passed ahead of him, so that windows were crowded with spectators. These were doomed to disappointment. Nothing happened. The procession left behind it the The Silver Dollar, the Last Chance, Chalkeye's Place and Pete's Palace.

Reaching the hotel first, Davis disappeared according to program into the side door. Curly followed, walked directly up the stairs, along the corridor, and passed without knocking into Room 217.

A young woman was sitting there engaged with some fancy work. Slender and straight, Kate Cullison rose and gave Curly her hand. For about two heartbeats her fingers lay cuddled in his big fist. A strange stifling emotion took his breath.

Then her arm fell to her side and she was speaking to him.

"Dad has gone to meet you. We've heard about what happened this morning."

"You mean what didn't happen. Beats all how far a little excitement goes in this town," he answered, embarrassed.

Her father and Maloney entered the room. Cullison wrung his hand.

"Glad to see you, boy. You're in luck that convict did not shoot you up while he had the chance. Saguache is sure buzzing this mo'ning with the way you stood up to him. That little play of yours will help with the jury in September."

Curly thanked him for going bail.

Luck fixed his steel-spoked eyes on him. "By what Dick tells me you've more than squared that account."

Kate explained in her soft voice. "Dick told us why you went up to Dead Cow creek."

"Sho! I hadn't a thing to do, so I just ran up there. Sam's in town with me. We're rooming together."

"Oh, take me to him," Kate cried.

"Not just now, honey," her father said gently. "This young man came here to tell us something. Or so I gathered from his friend Davis."

Flandrau told his story, or all of it that would bear telling before a girl. He glossed over his account of the dissipation at the horse ranch, but he told all he knew of Laura London and her interest in Sam. But it was when he related what he had heard at Chalkeye's place that the interest grew more tense. While he was going over the plot to destroy young Cullison there was no sound in the room but his voice. Luck's eyes burned like live coals. The color faded from the face of his daughter so that her lips were gray as cigar ash. Yet she sat up straight and did not flinch.

When he had finished the owner of the Circle C caught his hand. "You've done fine, boy. Not a man in Arizona could have done it better."

Kate said nothing in words, but her dark, long-lashed eyes rained thanks upon him.

They talked the situation over from all angles. Always it simmered down to one result. It was Soapy's first play. Until he moved they could not. They had no legal evidence except the word of Curly. Nor did they know on what night he had planned to pull off the hold-up. If they were to make a complete gather of the outfit, with evidence enough to land them in the penitentiary, it could only be after the hold-up.

Meanwhile there was nothing to do but wait and take what precautions they could against being caught by surprise. One of these was to see that Sam was never for an instant left unguarded either day or night. Another was to ride to Tin Cup and look the ground over carefully. For the present they could do no more than watch events, attracting no attention by any whispering together in public.

Before the conference broke up Kate came in with her protest.

"That's all very well, but what about Mr. Flandrau? He can't stay in Saguache with that man threatening to kill him on sight."

"Don't worry about me, Miss Kate," and Curly looked at her and blushed.

Her father smiled grimly. "No, I wouldn't, Kate. He isn't going to be troubled by that wolf just now."

"Doesn't stand to reason he'd spoil all his plans just to bump me off."

"But he might. He forgot all about his plans this morning. How do we know he mightn't a second time?"

"Don't you worry, honey. I've got a card up my sleeve," Luck promised.

Luck Cullison, the fighting sheriff, had had many a card up his sleeve and most of them were just the right cards. Nobody knew what kind of a hand he held now, but everybody felt he would sweep the table clean. Watch him deal in the next installment.

* * *

Out of Town Trade.

"MISS JIMSON told me we had a letletter from Mr. Bigguy today," announced the senior partner of the firm of Spink & Dingle.

"I sure am glad to hear that," replied Dingle, the junior member. "Bigguy is a regular fellow, and if we expect to get a nice fat order out of him it's up to us to show him a nice time while he's here."

"What do you mean, nice time?" queried Spink irately. "Are you planning on some fancy doings for yourself and trying to make believe Bigguy is the reason for it? Mr. Bigguy is a regular business man and don't expect a carnival put on just because he dropped into town to place an order."

"All right," snapped Dingle. "When Bigguy comes we'll bring him into the shop, sit in the back room and talk sewing machine bobbins at him till he's dizzy. When he gets out he'll be fighting mad and luck will have him run into some one from our rival's concern, which you truthfully know makes better bobbins than we do. If that's your idea of promoting sales, then I'll be on the lookout for a good bankruptcy lawyer."

"No, Dingle, that is not my idea. But I don't know why we should make a Roman holiday for every customer who comes in from an oil-can town where they never see anything."

"Now, you went and said something—they never see anything. That's why they come to the city to buy. It could be done as well from our catalog, but you can't get much fun picking an order from a catalog. Take one and try."

"Well, what did you intend to do with Bigguy when he comes?"

"What did I do with Hinkleman when he came in, Spink? Did he leave the biggest order we ever got or did he not?

"Didn't I meet Hinkleman at the train and, instead of leading him down here to the shop, speed him over to a hotel where we had a grand luncheon? From there didn't I take him to a matinee? From there didn't I take him to dinner and then to a show? After the show didn't I take him cabareting until 4 the next morning? After leaving him at 4:30 a. m. didn't I call again at 8, whiz him over to the shop and while he was still in a daze from the speed he had been going let you sell him the prize order? And didn't he buy everything you showed him because he was groggy with entertainment that he would have signed for anything in order to go back home to catch up on the sleep he lost? Is my system a regular one for getting the trade? Shall we give Bigguy the same course or will you bring him right into the shop and try to sell him while his mind is clear?"

"On consideration," said Spink thoughtfully, "I think maybe you had better step on the gas with Bigguy, as you did with Hinkleman. But what I'd like to have you explain, Dingle, is where you get the idea you are the only one of us two that can run the entertaining end of the business?"

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* * *

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* * *

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The Bayles Distributing Co., 1858 Grand Ave., Kansas City, Mo., will mail Free Sample of ANTI-FLAMMA, a Soothing Anti-septic Poultice that draws out the poisons, stops the itching around sores and Heals While You Work. Write today describing case.

* * *

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.....

Stories for the Ledger Boys and Girls

Ellen's Birthday Party.

ELLEN was the youngest in her family. And how she hated being the baby.

It was "Baby" this and "Baby" that until Ellen wished the day would come when she would be grown up and no one could possibly call her a baby any more.

When she was a tiny, teeny baby all of her sisters and brothers were so happy over her that they cuddled and petted her to the extreme. She was bounced and carried about first by big sister Helen, and then by big brother John. Often her little self would feel sore at so much handling; then she would think that the whooping cough or some such terrible thing had caught her in its grasp. Altogether it was a hard life—this being a much-loved baby.

After the first few birthdays, it seemed that this troublesome matter of being the baby of the family would wear out. But it continued the same as ever. Indeed, Ellen despaired that the time would ever come when her family would cease to call her Baby Ellen and make it plain "Ellen."

Then she reached the point where her fifth birthday was fast approaching. In a few weeks she would be 5, "going on 6"—and the idea pleased her mightily.

One evening when the family was gathered about the dinner table, and discussing a party to be given on "Baby" Ellen's fifth birthday, the little girl broke into tears and ran from the table. Her mother went after her and found her weeping bitterly in the nursery.

"What is the matter, my dear baby?" questioned her mother.

"Oh, there you go again, calling me Baby," Ellen said between tears. "Boo hoo!"

"Why, don't you like us to call you baby, dear; that means we love you and that you are our pet," said mother.

"Well, I am tired of being the baby," muttered Ellen. And with this remark she burst forth in floods of tears again.

Her mother rose from her chair, and seeing there was little use in trying to comfort the child, said: "You had better look out dear, or the family will be calling you cry-baby, instead of baby, and that won't please you at all. Lately you burst into tears at the slightest thing. Better outgrow that."

Ellen sat up as soon as she was alone. "Cry-baby," she repeated. "I shan't like that. Baby is bad enough, but cry-baby would be terrible. I'll have to watch and see that I do not cry any more—that is, unless I fall down and hurt myself," she added.

The weeks passed slowly. During all the time Ellen never once whimpered about the slightest thing that upset her. A couple of times the tears rose to her eyes, but she beat them back and came off victor. No one teased her, and strange to say, no one cuddled her and called her dear "baby."

The day of the party arrived. All the little girls from school appeared in their white starched dresses, and great pink or blue bows tying their hair. The little boys were spick and span, and every one was ready for a good time.

Games were played. Postoffice, Puss in Corner, and all the other old favorites were used for amusement. Everybody was tired of romping and playing when the doors leading into the dining-room were opened and the little group escorted into the dining-room, where the table was spread with dainties. Candies, pink and white, and cake with snowy icing, were ready to make the little boys and girls happy. The ice cream was pink and white, too, and it was as good as it looked.

Then came the surprise of the afternoon. A big birthday cake was brought into the room with five lovely pink candles lighted and glowing upon it.

Everybody murmured, "A birthday cake."

Ellen took it in her hand and held it high over her head, she was so delighted.

"Everybody look!" she cried, with glee.

Then she lowered it to the table, and gave a puff to blow out the candles, to see how many years she would live. She blew all the candles out at once, which was a sign of long life, and everybody laughed and appeared very, very gay indeed.

They all ate to the fullest. Each little boy and girl was filled with goodies. Then they returned to the parlor and Ellen's mother told everybody that her little daughter was now such a big girl, 5 years old, that she was no longer her little baby, and that hereafter no one was going to refer to her as the baby. She never cried, and she never acted like a baby, so it would be foolish to go on calling her something she wasn't any longer. Everybody laughed, and said that Ellen was indeed growing up.

When the party had gone for the evening, Ellen soon slipped away to bed. Her mother came in to kiss her goodnight, and as she did so she whispered without thinking, "Good-night, my little baby." Ellen clapped her hands for joy.

"Oh, mamma," she exclaimed, "I always want to be your little baby, no matter how big I am; it was only the others that I did not like to have baby me." And then she dropped off to sleep—this little girl who wanted to be mamma's baby but no one else's.

Robert Browning.

YOU have all heard the story of the Pied Piper of Hamlin who charmed the rats with his funny tune, and perhaps many of you would like to read the tale for yourselves. It has been put into very charming verse by the poet, Robert Browning. Browning was born in London on the 7th of May, 1812, and when he was still very young he began to compose verses. When he was quite little he enjoyed the advantage of much foreign travel and thru his travels he imbibed much of the interesting bits of fact and fiction that most boys and girls get only by the dint of hard study. When Browning was 19 years of age his verses were already being published. And considerable interest they drew towards the young man who had written them.

Browning was a deep thinker and often he tried to put more thought into his words than they could hold. For that reason some people find his poems hard to understand. Some of Browning's verses, however, are soul stirring poems which live forever in the literature of the English speaking world. When Browning was 34 years of age, he met and fell in love with a very charming lady, Elizabeth Barrett, whose verses had won for her much fame. She returned the poet's affection and these kindred souls were married. Their courtship and marriage are perhaps the basis of the most beautiful love story and romance ever enacted by real people. After the Brownings were married they went to Italy to live in an old palace, which stands on the Grand Canal in Venice and there Robert Browning spent the last days of his noteworthy life. On the day that his last book of verses was published the poet died. His body was taken back to England and placed with due ceremony in Westminster Abbey, on the last day of the year, 1889.

By the Court's Decree.

"WHOSE little girl are you?"

"Please, sir, this month I'm father's."

A FINE SCHEME.

MY, THE SUN must get up early,
For no matter how I try
To be first, he's there afore me,
Bright an' shinin' in the sky.

If I didn't see him evening's
Go to bed behind the hill,
I would b'lieve he never rested
But jus' kep 'a shinin' still.

But I know how I can ketch him,
I am goin' to sleep all day,
Then when night comes I reckon
I will be awake to stay.

An' I'll set 'longside the window,
An' for comp'ny take the pup,
Then he can't get out so early
But I'll see him gettin' up.

And Daddy Took the Hint.

MIRIAM FIELD is not quite nine. Also, she is very polite; of that there can be no possible doubt. A favorite uncle is visiting the family and Miriam wishes him to spend all his time with her. Uncle Roger and Dad were discussing politics after dinner, a day or two ago, about the time Dad is in the habit of bringing in enough coal to last for another twenty-four hours. Miriam hung around her uncle, tried to catch Dad's eye, stood first on one foot then on the other, and at last at a lull in the conversation her voice was heard: "Daddy, don't you have to bring in any coal today?"

She Caught Him.

"POP!"

"Yes, my son."

"Are you busy just now?"

"No, my boy. Why?"

"Got time to answer me a question?"

"Oh, I think so."

"Well, pop, how are lobsters caught?"

"Oh, go ask your mother. She ought to know!"

The Right Idea.

"WHAT does my little man want to buy today—sweets?" asked the shopkeeper.

"You bet I do!" was the infant's reply. "But I've got to buy soap."

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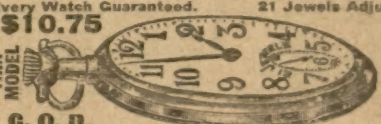

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"Success is in the blood," says Dr. John J. Van Horne, formerly Medical Inspector and Clinical Physician on the Board of Health of the City of New York. "There are men whom fate can never keep down. They triumph over difficulties and ill-fortune because they have within them the never-failing source of courage, confidence and power—pure, red blood, rich in stamina-building iron. Where others hesitate and stumble, these men march forward with a firm step and take the best prizes of life. Their brains are keenly alive, their bodies are fortified with the strength and energy that enables them to take and keep the best the world has to offer. But in the rush and tear of modern day life, many a man and woman neglects to keep their blood filled with strength-building iron and as a result they find themselves on the verge of a physical and nervous breakdown at a time when they should be enjoying their best years. In my opinion, physicians cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity of keeping the blood pure and red with plenty of iron, and I believe, they should at every opportunity prescribe organic iron—Nuxated Iron—for in my experience it is one of the best tonic and red blood builders known to medical science."

Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly physician of Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.), New York, and the Westchester County Hospital, in commenting upon the foregoing statement says: "Every keen, active, successful man and woman of today recognizes that a sound, strong body is the basis of all real achievement and they leave no stone unturned to safeguard their health. Lack of iron in the blood not only makes a man a physical and mental weakling, but it utterly robs him of that virile force, that stamina and strength of will which are so necessary to success and power in every walk of life. I strongly advise every man who is fagged out by worry, work and other strains to build up his strength, energy and endurance by taking some form of organic iron—Nuxated Iron—for I consider it one of the foremost blood and body builders; the best to which I have ever had recourse."

Manufacturer's Note: Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians, is not a secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated and does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach. The manufacturers guarantee successful and entirely satisfactory results to every purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

NUXATED IRON

For Red Blood, Strength and Endurance

HOT OFF THE JOKESMITH'S ANVIL

It's a Rotten Life.

"Oh, it's a rotten life!" sighed the youngest lodger. "One blamed old thing after another! And trouble all the time!"

"What's the matter now?" asked the lady of the house.

"More labor troubles! It's absolutely sickening!"

"Not another strike, surely, Frank?"

"No. Much worse than that!" replied Frank, drawing at his cigar. "The boss has given in, and we've got to start work again on Monday!"

Unapproachable Fishing.

The angler tackled the manager of the country hotel angrily.

"What do you mean by luring visitors here with the promise of fine fishing?" he said. "There isn't a bit of fishing here. Every brook has a sign warning people off."

"I didn't say anything about fine fishing, sir," said the manager calmly. "If you will kindly read my advertisement again with more care you will see that what I said was, 'Fishing unapproachable.'"

Fine Idea.

Dubbins—"I didn't know he had to pay an income tax."

Grubber—"Oh, yes; he charged people for answering income tax questions and he made so much he had to pay one himself."

But It Sounded That Way.

The assistant manager of a popular hotel asked a visitor who was seeing hotel life for the first time from the mezzanine floor how she liked it.

"Wal, it's purty nice. But I didn't know your women were so conceited."

"Conceited?" gasped the assistant manager. "Why, some of the finest women in the country are staying here."

"Wal, maybe they are. But I don't like a woman that sends a little boy around to tell folks she's missed her car," replied the country dame.

"Impossible!" said the assistant manager. "Why, I never heard of such a thing."

"Wal, you'll hear it now, for here comes that poor little feller again."

And down in the lobby came a page boy calling:

"Mrs. de Vere—Mr. Carr—Mrs. de Vere—Mr. Carr."

The Unfortunate Commuter.

Too late! The saddest words in all our tongue.

Disheveled and weary, the stout suburbanite sank gasping on a seat in the railway station, and glared at the rear end of the train he had just missed.

To him came the pompous, fussy station-master.

"Were you trying to catch that train, sir?" he asked.

The panting would-be passenger eyed him balefully for a second before he hissed in reply:

"Oh, no! I merely wished to chase it out of the station!"

A Stayer.

Two rich business men were chatting together when an elderly man passed by.

"That's Brown; he works for me," said one of the two.

"He's an honest-looking chap," remarked the other. "Has he any staying power?"

"He has that," replied the first. "He began at the bottom of the ladder in '76, and he's stayed there ever since."

Giving to Sister.

"Well, Willie, what are you going to give your little sister for New Year's?"

"The mumps, I guess. Last year I gave her the measles."

Picture Writing.

Baron Rempei Kondo, president of a steamship company, said at a dinner he gave recently in New York:

"The Japanese are a very clean people. I know an American traveler who will testify to this.

"The traveler, half famished, made his way one day into a teahouse in a remote Japanese village. A geisha girl ushered him into a spotless, airy room and brought him a cup of unsweetened tea. As he could speak no Japanese, he tried to explain by signs that he wanted a full meal, but the girl, tho she smiled politely, failed to understand.

"So the traveler thought he would resort to another means. He took out his notebook and pencil, drew a fish and an egg, and handed the drawing to the geisha. This time she laughed delightedly, clapped her hands and ran from the room.

"The traveler was pleased. He waited contentedly for his meal. Five or ten minutes passed. Then the door opened and two attendants staggered in with a portable bath, brimful of hot water and a cake of soap.

The Girl Question.

I call on Ruth because she has a piano with lots of new music which I enjoy playing.

I call on Emily because her father tells me funny stories.

I call on Henrietta because I am kept warm—by the glow of her hearth.

I call on Evelyn because I like the brand of cigarettes her brother smokes.

I call on Flora because I like to hear her dad and mother argue.

I call on Mary because she always asks me to stay to dinner.

I call on Lillian because I love davenports.

But I'm looking for the girl—she doesn't need to have a piano, a hearth, a davenport, or even a mother and father, as long as she plays papa to me and comforts me while I am longing for my old girl back home.

Was a Purist Himself.

An Indiana school superintendent promoted a grade teacher to the English department in the high school. He was discussing the work with her when she suddenly said: "Oh, Mr. ——, it's going to be so hard for me. You see, I've always used so much slang, and now when I teach English I won't dare use any more."

"Slang," ejaculated the superintendent. "Well, believe me, Alice, you'll have to cut that out now."

The Third Estate.

Schreecham—"He was a wise poet who remarked that in this world a man must be either anvil or hammer."

Peacham—"Oh, I don't know! It seems that most of them are merely bellows."

Dance a Hornpipe.

"What is meant by the 'freedom of the seas'?"

"Haven't you ever heard about the three-mile limit regulation?"

You Said It.

Jack—"Say, Jill, you didn't know that I was an electrician? I missed my calling."

Jill—"How's that?"

Jack—"Why, last night, over at Jane's the electric light fuse burnt out. Guess who fixed it? Me—I—myself."

Jill—"Huh! You're no electrician—you're an idiot."

Soon Out of Sight.

"So you think you are becoming nearsighted, do you?" said the optician.

"Yes I do" replied the tired business man.

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I can't see a dollar go near as far as I used to."

An Admission.

"I guess my wife thinks I'm a pretty smart man."

"Why?"

"She admits that I am half as smart as she thought I was the day we were married."

Might Help.

"Good many scraps in the house these days," remarked the parliamentarian.

"What of it?"

"I was just thinking I'd better post up a little bit on prize fight rules."

Brain Teasers.

Beheadings.

292—The letters of these words form a word which is not deep.

Behead to cut and leave to whip.

Behead the back part of the foot and leave a slippery fish.

Behead not here and leave a highroad.

Behead a good time and leave a boat.

Behead a simple machine and leave a word meaning always.

Behead what horses eat and leave a preposition.

Behead what the victor has done and leave an adverb.

Eight "Citys."

Each Word Ends In City.

293—1—Fierce cruelty.
2—Fewness.
3—Insufficiency.
4—Speed.
5—Impudence.
6—Mental penetration.
7—Stubborn insistence.
8—Shocking cruelty.

Curtailings.

294—Curtail what every girl wants to have and leave to burn.

Curtail shy and gentle and leave to object.

Curtail what an artist does and leave a cause of agony.

Curtail to be melancholy and leave to wipe off.

Curtail a figure used in chess and leave an animal's foot.

Curtail a sticky substance and leave something gone by.

Curtail caste or standing and leave a part of the verb "to run."

Curtail what the sun does on clear days and leave a part of the leg.

Word Square.

295—My first fills the shield of the flag.
My second is used for binding.
My third the African woods are full of.
My fourth we enjoy at night.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES.

288. Word Transformation.

A. Nag. Gnat. Tang. Grant. Garnet. Granite. Tearing. Rating. Train. Rant. Ant. Tan. A.

289. Ten Timeless "Tics."

1. Fran-tic.
2. Dras-tic.
3. Poli-tic.
4. Fantas-tic.
5. Domes-tic.
6. Mas-tic.
7. Pneuma-tic.
8. Sarcas-tic.
9. Didac-tic.

290. Fruit Additions.

1. Peach-Chapel. 2. Melon-Solemn. 3. Pear-Prate. 4. Plum-Plump. 5. Date-Tamed. 6. Fig-Gift. 7. Apple-Dapple.

291. Four Word Square.

K I N G
I D E A
N E A T
G A T E

It is not desired that readers send in the answers to the puzzles. They are printed simply as brain teasers, and the correct answers will be printed the following week.

Poor Memory.

First Mere Man—"I understand that your wife, once an ardent advocate for votes for women, doesn't vote any more. What's the reason?"

Second Mere Man—"Oh, she forgot what age she gave when she voted the first time and she doesn't want to commit perjury."

True to Form.

The demobilized Army doctor closed the bedroom door reverently and faced his colleague with a sober nod of the head.

"He's gone," he said. "Nothing more to be done except paint him with embalming fluid and mark him heaven."

The New Voter.

"Did your wife vote?"

"Yes."

"Get along all right?"

"Yes, but it took her a long while to get her ballots folded like a paper napkin."

Relief Either Way.

Visitor—"Why do you allow your daughter to bang the piano so?"

Father—"I'm hoping she'll either sprain her wrist or break the piano."

More Interest.

"What is your favorite book?"

"My bank book; but even that is lacking in interest these days."

Doping It Out.

"Why do they have knots on the ocean instead of miles?"

"Well, you see, they couldn't have the ocean tide if there were no knots."

TOURING.

Time was when the boxer who thought he could punch
Was always prepared for a fight,
And would wallop a man in the nose or the lunch,
And try for a purse every night:
But now, with the movies and vaudeville stuff,
And the circus and guaranteed cures
He "cheerfully" helps on the ad page to puff,
He scarcely has time for his tours.

When a wrestler gets busy and finds him a man
Whom he's sure he can easily throw,
And travels around from Beersheba to Dan
To harvest the citizen's dough,
We speak of the fellow who pays at the gate
As a goof when he falls for the lure
Of the grappler's press agent, but folks grab the bait
Of the boxer who goes on a tour.

A Question of Speed.

"Can I catch the 4 o'clock express for Worcester?"

"That depends upon how fast you can run. It started thirteen minutes ago," said the gateman, calmly.

An Important Question.

"I wish to marry your daughter," said the young man to the girl's father.

"Does she love you?" asked the father.

"Yes, sir. And I love her."

"Well, that, of course, is the first necessary condition, but there are a few more questions I must ask. Have you made any shopping tours with her lately?"

"No sir."

"Ever been in a department store and asked the present price of women's suits and hats?"

"No sir."

"Know anything at all about the cost of provisions?"

"Only that which I have learned from the talk of others."

"Well, young man, my advice to you is to make a trip of investigation. I don't know what your present income is, but after you've learned for yourself just what those clothes she wears are costing me, if you come back and say that you can support her in the style to which she has been accustomed lately, I'll give my consent."

The D. T. Doctor.

"How's the hubby?"

"Just so so! He was in Worthington's private stock the other evening and we had to call in help!"

"A doctor?"

"No, a snake charmer!"

A Neglected Cave Wife.

Mrs. Multiskins, the Slum Visitor—"Does your husband beat you?"

Mrs. Fewskins—"Not once since we've been married. He doesn't show me any of those little loverlike attentions."

CLASSIFIED WANT ADS

OLD COINS WANTED

OLD COINS WANTED. WE PAY UP TO $100.00 each for certain dates of gold dollars. Premiums paid on some coins as late as 1916. Thousands of coins wanted. Many are in circulation. Watch your change and get posted. Send 4c. Get our large illustrated Coin Circular. Send now. Numismatic Bank, Dept. 12, Fort Worth, Texas.

MEDICAL

SUFFERERS FROM KIDNEY AND BLADder trouble, causing backache, nervousness, tired and worn out feeling, frequent desire to urinate, smarting and burning. Do not suffer any longer but write us for free symptom blank and advice. Hinze Medical Institute, 22 Washington Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn.

CLASSIFIED WANT ADS

Information—The rate for one insertion in The Saturday Blade and one insertion in the Chicago Ledger is 35 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next.

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500-514 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

AGENTS WANTED

BIGGEST MONEY-MAKER IN AMERICA. I want 100 men and women quick to take orders for raincoats, raincapes and waterproof aprons. Thousands of orders waiting for you. $2.00 an hour for spare time. McDonough made $813.00 in one month. Nissen $19.00 in three hours. Purviance $207.00 in seven days. $5,000 a year profit for eight average orders a day. No delivering or collecting. Beautiful coat free. No experience or capital required. Write quick for information. Comer Manufacturing Co., Dept. B-157, Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS—THE INCREASING PRICE OF gasoline makes our V. A. C. Gas Saver the biggest, quickest auto accessory seller in America. The one carbon eliminator and gas saver that really does the work. Car owner agents making big money. One sale makes you ten more because each sale makes an enthusiastic booster. County and State territory open. Send for particulars. Battro Products Mfg. Co., 1720-28 Wazee St., Denver, Colo.

AGENTS—BEST SELLER; JEM RUBBER Repair for tires and tubes; supersedes vulcanization at a saving of over 800 per cent.; put it on cold, it vulcanizes itself in two minutes, and is guaranteed to last the life of the tire or tube; sells to every auto owner and accessory dealer. For particulars how to make big money and free sample, address Amazon Rubber Co., Philadelphia, Pa., Dept. 704.

AGENTS—BIG SUMMER SELLER. SOME- thing new; concentrated soft drinks. Just add water; delicious drinks in a jiffy—anytime, anywhere. Big sellers for home, picnics, parties, socials, etc. Guaranteed under pure food laws. Carry in pocket. Agents coining money—$6 to $12 a day. Write for free outfit offer today. American Products Co., 2449 American Bldg., Cincinnati, O.

WATER STILLS, MADE ENTIRELY OF heavy copper, one and three gallon capacity, prices $25.00 and $40.00 respectively. Shipped prepaid by express or parcel post the same day we receive your order. Ideal for distilling water for automobile batteries, industrial uses, and drinking purposes. Boyer & Co., Dept. M 519, Farnam Bldg., Omaha, Nebraska.

NOVELTY SPRAY AND FORCE PUMP. Throws a stream 60 feet. Has four adjustable nozzles. Invaluable for all kinds of spraying and extinguishing fire. Fastest moneymaker on market. Agents clearing over $100 weekly. Fruit tree salesmen double sales with it. Liberal terms. Prompt shipments. Phillips Manufacturing Co., Atlanta, Ga.

OUR MEN EARN $150 TO $500 PER MONTH selling wonderful series of uncensored stereographs of the late World War. Everybody interested; a sure money maker, endorsed by men like Edison. Exclusive territory contract to live wires. Write today. Underwood and Underwood, Inc., Dept. B.B., 417 Fifth Ave., New York.

AGENTS: A BRAND NEW HOSIERY PROP- osition for men, women and children. Must wear 12 months or replaced free. All styles, colors and fancy stripes. You can sell at less than store prices. Every home a prospect. Write for samples. Thomas Hosiery Co., 3311 North St., Dayton, Ohio.

PORTRAITS, MEDALLIONS, PHOTO PIL- low tops, luminous crucifix, photo plates, frames, sheet pictures, papier mache frames, etc. Lowest prices, rejects credited; prompt shipments; 30 days' credit; catalog and samples free. Jas. C. Bailey, Desk G-1, Chicago.

AGENTS: SELL RICH-LOOKING IMPORTED 36x68 rugs, $1 each. Carter, Tenn., sold 115 in four days; profit $57. You can do same. Write for sample offer selling plan; exclusive territory; sample rug prepaid $1.39. Condon, Importer, Stonington, Maine.

EARN EASILY $10 DAILY AND MORE DIS- tributing established line summer drinks, foods, flavoring extracts, soaps, toilet preparations. Write for complete "Wonder Outfit." Crofts & Reed, 424 Clairmont Ave., Chicago.

AGENTS—LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS agents to sell hosiery, underwear, shirts, dresses, skirts, waists, shoes, clothing, etc. Write for free samples. Madison Mills, 503 Broadway, New York.

AGENTS—A NEW ONE! HARPER'S FIBRE broom and Ten-use brush set combined. Saves broom expense; lightens housework; easy seller; first order returnable. Harper Brush Works, Dept. B, Fairfield, Iowa.

SELL INSYDE TYRES, GENUINE INNER armor for auto tires; double mileage; prevents punctures and blowouts; tremendous demand. American Accessories Company, Dept. 126, Cincinnati, Ohio.

AGENTS—MAKE A DOLLAR AN HOUR. Sell Mendets, a patent patch for instantly mending leaks in all utensils. Sample package free. Collette Mfg. Co., Dept. 707-C, Amsterdam, N. Y.

BIG PROFITS SELLING JUBILEE SPARK intensifiers to automobile owners, garages. Banishes spark plug trouble. Saves gas. Exclusive territory. Jubilee Mfg. Co., 120 Sta. C., Omaha, Nebr.

AGENTS, $40 to $100 A WEEK. FREE SAM- ples. Gold sign letters anyone can put on store windows. Liberal offer to general agents. Metallic Letter Co., 431 M, North Clark, Chicago.

SELL NECESSITIES. EVERYBODY NEEDS and buys the "Business Guide." Bryant cleared $800.00 in July. Send for sample. It's free. Nichols & Co., Box 8B, Naperville, Ill.

AGENTS — I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff; 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. Lacassian Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS — WONDERFUL SELLER, 96c profit every dollar sales. License unnecessary. No stock to carry. Sample free. Mission Bead Co., Factory, Los Angeles, Cal.

AGENTS WANTED — SELL SHAWMUT guaranteed shoes; exclusive territory; latest styles sold at factory prices. Write today. Shawmut, Box 132, Boston, Mass.

AGENTS: SELL NEVERFAIL IRON RUST and stain remover. Huge profits. Big line. Sample. Write to-day. Sanford-Beal Co. Inc., Dept. 8, Newark, N. Y.

AGENTS: MASON SOLD 18 SPRAYERS AND Autowashers one Saturday; profits $2.50 each; square deal. Particulars free. Rusler Company, Johnstown, Ohio.

AGENTS—OUR SOAP AND TOILET AR- ticle plan is a wonder. Get our free sample case offer. Ho-Ro-Co., 125 Locust, St. Louis.

HELP WANTED

WANTED—MEN—WOMEN, OVER 17. Hundreds railway mail clerks. Examinations everywhere July 14. $1,300-$2,150. Vacancy list free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. W 29, Rochester, N. Y.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

STOP DAILY GRIND. START SILVERING mirrors, auto headlights, tableware, etc. Plans free. Clarence Sprinkle, Dept. 2, Marion, Indiana.

MALE HELP WANTED

RAILWAY TRAFFIC INSPECTORS EARN from $110 to $200 per month and expenses. Travel if desired. Unlimited advancement. No age limit. We train you. Positions furnished under guarantee. Write for Booklet CM 12, Standard Business Training Institute, Buffalo, N. Y.

MEN—AGE 17 TO 45. EXPERIENCE UN- necessary. Travel; make secret investigations, report. Salaries; expenses. American-Foreign Detective Agency, 126, St. Louis.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, $140-$200, colored porters by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 686 Ry. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ills.

WANTED MAN—EACH LOCALITY—DE- tective—finger print service. Experience unnecessary. Address Business Men's Security Alliance, 110 Peoria, Ill.

BE A DETECTIVE $50-$100 WEEKLY; travel over world; experience unnecessary. American Detective Agency, 300 Lucas, St. Louis.

MEN WANTED. BECOME AUTO EXPERTS. $45 week. Learn while earning. Write Franklin Institute, Dept. W, 804, Rochester, N. Y.

BE A DETECTIVE. EXCELLENT OPPOR- tunity, good pay, travel. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

BECOME DETECTIVES—BIG PAY; EASY work; free particulars. Captain Wagner, 186 East 79th, New York.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

LADIES WANTED, AND MEN, TOO, TO AD- dress envelopes and mail advertising matter at home for large mail order firms, spare or whole time. Can make $10 to $35 weekly. No capital or experience required. Book, explaining everything, mailed for 10c to cover postage, etc. Ward Publishing House, Tilton, N. H.

WOMEN TO SEW. GOODS SENT PRE- paid to your door; plain sewing; steady work; no canvassing. Send stamped envelope for prices paid. Universal Co., Dept. 54, Philadelphia, Pa.

LADIES MAKE YOUR OWN HATS. INDI- vidual lessons by mail. Beautiful midsummer hat free. Write for circular B. W. Chicago School of Millinery, 105 W. Monroe St., Chicago.

WANTED WOMEN. BECOME EXPERT dress designers. $125 month. Sample lessons free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. W 854, Rochester, N. Y.

MICHIGAN FARM LANDS FOR SALE

GOOD HARDWOOD LAND ON CREDIT IN Kalkaska and Antrim Counties, Michigan. Raises fine grain, fruit, truck. $15 to $35 per A. Easy terms. 10 to 160 acres. No swamps or stones. Free farm advisers and insurance. Good markets, schools, churches, hardroads, etc. Best land offer in U. S. from largest company. Established 1898. Write today for free booklet. Swigart Land Co., X1245 Nat'l Bank Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

FARMS WANTED

WANTED—HEAR FROM OWNER FARM for sale. Price, description. D. F. Bush, Minneapolis, Minn.

IF YOU WANT TO SELL OR EXCHANGE your property write me. John J. Black, 79th St., Chippewa Falls, Wis.

MOTORCYCLES

USED AND REBUILT INDIANS, EXCEL- siors, Harleys. Overhauled and tested by experts. Guaranteed and shipped on approval. We save you big money. We furnish bank references. Send stamp for free list. Floyd Clymer, Dept. 5, "Largest Motorcycle Dealer in Western America," Denver, Colorado.

WANTED—ALL KINDS OF SECONDHAND motorcycles for cash. Send description and lowest price. Harry R. Geer Co., 900 McLaren Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

PATENTS

INVENTORS—DESIRING TO SECURE PAT- ent should write for our guide book, "How to Get Your Patent." Send model or sketch and description for our opinion of its patentable nature. Randolph Co., Dept. 174, Washington, D. C.

INVENTORS—MY CLIENTS KNOW EVERY step taken in prosecuting their applications. Booklet sent free on request. Warner Cubberley, 23-A National Union Bldg., Washington, D. C.

SHORT STORIES WANTED

WRITE PHOTOPLAYS: $25-$300 PAID anyone for suitable ideas. Experience unnecessary; complete outline free. Producers League, 420 St. Louis.

TRICKS—GAMES

MYSTIFY YOUR FRIENDS. VENTRILO- quism, hypnotism, spiritualism, magic tricks explained. Mystery Manual 25c. Money refunded if dissatisfied. Helliskirk, St. Louis, Mo.

FREE! LATEST ILLUSTRATED CATALOG pocket tricks, jokes, puzzles, books and imported novelties. Large low priced line. "10 Select Card Tricks," 6c. Send today! The Douglas Co., Sta. A, Dallas, Texas.

MAGIC GOODS, CARDS, GAMES, BOOKS, tricks. Catalogue free. National Supply Co., Box 116, Edina, Mo.

250 MAGIC TRICKS AND BIG CATALOG. Tricks, jokes, books, pictures, etc., 10c. United Sales Co., Springfield, Ill.

MAGIC GOODS, BOOKS, CARDS, LODE- stone, tricks. Catalog free. B. L. Smith Co., Newark, Mo.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

BUY AN OIL LEASE. $10 BUYS FIVE acres Texas field; Desdiamonia leases sold 75c, now worth $10,000 per acre; Carter paid 75c per acre and sold for $8,000 per acre; Texas-Rainbow's End now opening up shows same geological formation as proven territory; leases here may jump any price with first well coming in; it's a speculation, but the kind of speculation that has made many small investors rich; the Fortune Oil Co. started in by several men pooling $400 in leases, sold out recently for a million dollars; if you don't understand lease business, we will gladly explain all details; remit $10 for five acres; we send you legal lease form and keep you in touch with developments; send name for free map and full information. Rainbow's End Co., 415 Herskowitz Bldg., Oklahoma City, Okla.

DON'T INVEST IN OIL UNTIL YOU READ The Texas Investor, Weekly Magazine. Gives concise, reliable, up-to-date information and facts about most wonderful developments and fortune-making in history of Texas oil, and explains one particular opportunity in which investors should reap tremendous returns; published by practical oil operator and tells how and where to invest for greatest safety and quick results. Write for free trial subscription. C. C. Cannan, Publisher, 739 Scanlan Bldg., Houston, Texas.

AN OIL "WILDCAT?" WHAT IS IT? MY free book explains fully. Interesting and instructive, and may make and save you money. Contains no advertising. Sent without obligation on your part if you tear out this ad now and mail with name and address. Charles H. Saunders, 1205 Denham Bldg., Denver, Colo.

TEN CENTS A DAY GETS WARRANTY deed to land in Texas. Actual land, not lease or stock. Also share in cooperative well. Biggest bargain in Texas today. Lots going fast. Wonderful opportunity for big monthly income. Free maps and particulars. Bank references furnished on request. Sourlake Texas Oil Co., 308 DeMenil, St. Louis, Mo.

WANTED 200 MEN TO INVEST $50 TO $100 in oil company which has more than 1,000 acres of the best prospective oil land in Texas, and 8⅓ acres of absolutely proven land. You cannot lose. Write for particulars. Conroe Oil Company, 804 Union National Bank Building, Houston, Texas.

$2.00 MONTHLY BUYS DEED TO LAND and interest in oil wells that should pay $100 for each $2.00 invested. Write for particulars. Texas Gulf Company, 633 First Nat'l Bank, Houston, Texas.

SEND TEN CENTS (STAMPS) AND GET latest issue "Oil Ledger," giving all data on Texas oil fields. Statistical Department, 807 Union National Bank Building, Houston, Texas.

AS SAFE AS A BANK. 300% ANNUALLY. If you can invest fifteen dollars upwards, write, Midwest Investment Bureau, Boston Block, Minneapolis, Minn.

THOUSANDS MADE IN OIL. IF YOU HAVE $50.00 to $100.00 to invest, write me. L. J. Carroll, 806 Union National Bank Building, Houston, Texas.

A 10 ACRE LEASE FOR YOU, NEWEST Texas oil field. Full details, maps free. Ask for folder "B," Texoland Syndicate, Laughlin Bldg., Los Angeles, Cal.

START OIL PAINTING STUDIO. $1,500- $5,000 yearly. Pay after started. Booklet free. "Tangley," 44 Main, Muscatine, Iowa.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

EARN $25.00 TO $50.00 DAILY. NO EXPE- rience required. Small investment buys standard professional machine, film, supplies, complete stationary or traveling equipments, all ready for work. Easy payments. Your choice of three lighting systems. Openings everywhere. Large catalog free. Monarch Theatre Supply Co., Dept. 527, Ellsworth Bldg., Chicago.

LARGE PROFITS DAILY MADE IN THIS business. Openings everywhere. Small capital starts you. Complete outfits sold on installments. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog free. Atlas Moving Picture Company, Morton Building, Chicago.

ALBERTA RANCH LAND FOR SALE

1600 ACRES OF FARM AND RANCH LAND, six miles North of Lundbreck on the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's Crow's Nest line for sale. 1,000 acres capable of being broken and cultivated, and 200 acres ready for crop. Splendid barns and corrals and water on every quarter section. The house is built of stone, has seven rooms, hot air furnace and sub-drainage system. For further particulars apply McDonald, Martin & Mackenzie, Solicitors, MacLeod, Alberta.

BOYS AND GIRLS

ANY BOY OR GIRL CAN EARN LOTS OF pocket money out of school hours working for us. Just write to Home Mfg. Co., S23, New Albany, Ind.

SONG POEMS WANTED

SONG-WRITERS MANUAL AND GUIDE sent free! Contains valuable instructions and advice. Submit song-poems for examination. We will furnish music, copyright and facilitate publication or sale. Knickerbocker Studios, 306 Gaiety Bldg., New York.

IF YOU WILL WRITE—THE WORDS FOR a song, I will write the music and guarantee publisher's acceptance. Poems on any subject acceptable. Ethwell Hanson, Room 136, 3808 Broadway, Chicago, Ill.

WRITE THE WORDS FOR A SONG. WE write music; guarantee publisher's acceptance. Submit poems on patriotism, love or any subject. Chester Music Co., 920 South Michigan Ave., Suite 106, Chicago.

YOU WRITE THE WORDS FOR A SONG. We'll compose the music free and publish same. Send song poem today. E. Lenox Co., 271 W. 125th St., New York.

PHOTOGRAPHY

FILMS DEVELOPED FREE—ANY SIZE. 12 prints (trial order) 2c each. Quick, satisfactory work guaranteed. Remit with order. Save money. Bennett Studio, Hyde Park, Cincinnati, O.

OLD COINS

COLLECT OLD COINS FOR PLEASURE and profit. Send only 10c. Get large old U. S. copper cent, nearly size of half-dollar and illustrated coin catalogue. Send now. B. Max Mehl, Coin Dealer, Dept. Y, Mehl Building, Fort Worth, Texas.

OF INTEREST TO WOMEN

SEND YOUR NAME AND WE'LL SEND you a beautiful pearl necklace. When it arrives deposit $5 with your post man. If you decide to keep it pay us $2 a month until $25 has been paid. We allow full value in exchange for higher priced necklaces. B. & D. Sales Co., P. O. Box 20, Providence, R. I.

IF YOU HAVE $50 OR $100, INVEST IT where you may get back several thousand. Write Conroe Oil Company, 808 Union National Bank Building, Houston, Texas.

VAUDEVILLE

MAKE $75.00 TO $2500.00 WEEKLY. LEARN how to become a vaudeville actor. Best paying profession in the world. Travel. See the country. Complete in one book, postpaid, $1.00. Malmrose & Herbert, 1626 Masonic Temple, Chicago, Ill.

PERSONAL

WEAK, NERVOUS, RUN DOWN MEN; IF you get up in the morning with a dull brain, tired nerves, an ache in the back, a dread of the toil and hardships of every day life, these are signs that some of the organs or functions of your body are not in a healthy condition and should have attention at once. We cure chronic, nervous, kidney, bladder diseases. Book, symptom blank and advice free. Dr. Meyers, 316 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

MEN WHO ARE LOSING OUT IN LIFE can find a marvelous remedy and complete restoration in 808 Tablets—the wonderful 48-hour medicine. Different from anything ever heard of. Hold's world's record. $1 per box. Particulars and wonderful testimonials free. 808 Chemical Co., Dept. G, Pittsburg, Kansas.

MEN—OUR TREATMENT NEVER FAILS TO restore strength to those troubled with nervous, weak, run-down and despondent conditions that undermine good health. Costs nothing if not cured. Write for free book. Cumberland Chemical Co., 32 Berry Block, Nashville, Tenn.

THOUSANDS ANXIOUS TO MARRY. Worth to $100,000. Confidential descriptions free in plain sealed envelope. Satisfaction guaranteed. Long established, reliable, trustworthy. Peoples Club, Box 4, San Diego, California.

MARRY. THOUSANDS CONGENIAL PEO- ple, worth from $1,000 to $50,000 seeking early marriage; descriptions, photos, introductions free. Sealed. Either sex. Send no money. Address Standard Cor. Club, Grayslake, Ill.

GET MARRIED — BEST MATRIMONIAL magazine published, mailed free. Many worth from $1,000 and upward wanted to get married both sex. Address, American Distributor, Suite 215, Blairsville, Pennsylvania.

HAIR GROWN ON BALD HEADS $10, SU- perfluous hair removed forever $5.00. Satisfaction or money back. Knapp Trio, 376 Pleasant Ave., St. Paul, Minn. References: Commercial State Bank.

FOR ABSOLUTE SATISFACTION; BEST largest; established 15 years; thousands wealthy members. Confidential. Old Reliable Club, Mrs. Wrubel, 732 Madison, Oakland, Calif.

MARRY; MOST SUCCESSFUL "HOME Maker;" hundreds rich; confidential; reliable; years experience; descriptions free. "The Successful Club," Box 556, Oakland, California.

MARRY—BEAUTIFUL WEALTHY—YOUNG lady, farmer's daughter. Wishes to marry at once. Send stamp for reply. Box 504, Tallahassee, Fla.

EVERYBODY SUFFERING PILES, FISTULA, fissures, ulceration, constipation, bleeding, itching, free trial. Painless Cure, S. U. Tarney, Auburn, Ind.

MARRY? JOIN THE "HOME CORRE- spondence Club." Particulars free. Confidential. Mrs. J. Keena, 222 Morrison St., Grand Rapids, Mich.

WHY HESITATE? IF YOU WOULD MARRY wealth, goodness or good looks, without publicity, write, Jesse Hart, Station H, Cleveland, Ohio. Desk 7.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and descriptions free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY — FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

303 NAMES, ADDRESSES, DESCRIP- tions, also pictures, lonesome, marriageable people, 25c. Box 3317B, Boston, Massachusetts.

CATHOLICS WISHING TO MARRY, WANT- ing introductions. Booklet free. Catholic Correspondence Club, S. D. Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRY—BEST PLAN, HUNDREDS RICH, confidential, reliable. Lists and descriptions free. Unity, E-3, Grand Rapids, Mich.

IF YOU WISH A PRETTY AND WEALTHY wife, write Lillian Sproul, Sta. H., Cleveland, Ohio, enclosing stamped envelope.

MAKE ACQUAINTANCES EVERYWHERE. Send 25c for copy of Feminine Review, Dept. B4, 105 W. Monroe St., Chicago.

MARRY! FREE DIRECTORY WITH DE- scriptions and photos. Bonafide Co., Dept. 5, Kansas City, Mo.

WIDOW WORTH $50,000, MAIDEN $25,000, anxious to marry gentlemen. Mrs. Warn, 2216½ Temple St., Los Angeles, Cal.

GET MARRIED—BEST MATRIMONIAL PA- per published. Free for stamp. Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

GET MARRIED—MANY WEALTHY CLI- ents desiring early marriage. Address Opal Club, Box 92, Rosiere, N. Y.

MARRIAGE PAPER — PHOTOS, DESCRIP- tions, many rich, want to marry. Free. H. Jahn, St. Paul, Minn.

ONE NIGHT CORN CURE. 25 CENTS postpaid. Cervis Laboratory, 10 Home Bldg., Louisville, Ky.

BACHELOR GIRL, 25, WITH $20,000, WISH- es to marry. B-Box 313, Corr. Co., Monroe, Mich.

BUSINESS MAN, 45, WORTH $50,000, would marry. D-Box 35, League, Toledo, Ohio.

SUGAR 4½c Per Lb.

You know how hard it is to get sugar, even when you pay the big price demanded by grocers, and what it means to be able to buy it direct from us at only 4½ cents a pound. Yet sugar is only one of a long list of groceries on which we can save you money. Just in order to prove what a big advantage you have in dealing with us, we list below a trial order which saves you $1.20. Regular value of these articles is $3.19—our price only $1.99. And we guarantee that every item is absolutely pure, fresh, standard high grade—just what you have been paying about twice our wholesale price for. You wouldn't think of going back to the costly old way of buying groceries after you have proved the economy of buying from the Big 4 Grocery Bargain Catalog. Send only $1.99 with the Trial Order Coupon below, and begin saving money right away.

Trial Order No. 11

Big 4 Wholesale Prices

2 pounds Granulated Sugar	$0.09
1 bar Fels Naptha Soap	.02
1 bar Ivory Soap	.04
1 package Big 4 Brand Best Tea	.35
¼ pound pure Cocoa	.12
1 pound pure Baking Powder	.42
1 4-oz. bottle Vanilla Flavor Extract	.49
1 box Powdered Bluing (Equal to about 1 gal. average best bluing)	.29
1 bottle Machine Oil	.17
YOU SAVE $1.20 Total	$1.99

RUSH your trial order at once and get our wholesale grocery catalog in which you will find many of the most startling grocery bargains ever offered.

References We are one of the big leading Wholesale Grocers in Chicago. Our bank, Foreman Bros. Banking Company, or any mercantile institution in Chicago can tell you about us.

We Guarantee you absolute satisfaction or your money back. In every instance you get pure, fresh goods of the very highest quality. Send the coupon for the trial order today.

Big 4 Company

112-118 N. May St., Dept. 1089, Chicago, Ill.

Catalog Bargains

Remember that with your first order you get a free copy of our big wholesale catalog which saves you money on all your grocery purchases. Here are just a few catalog specials. Sold in wonderful money-saving combinations.

Flour, Per Barrel $7.98
Sugar, 100 Lbs. $4.50
Uneeda Biscuits, 12 Packages 35c
Quaker Oats, Large Package 4c

Mail Coupon Now!

Our low prices merely indicate what you can now save on all your groceries, a full line of which is listed in our Wholesale Catalog—**The Big Money Saver.** This catalog sent to customers only. A free copy will be sent with your first order. Send this coupon **NOW—TODAY.**

TRIAL ORDER COUPON

Big 4 Co. 112-118 North May Street Dept. 1089, Chicago, Illinois

Gentlemen:—Enclosed find $1.99 for which send me at once your Trial Order No. 11, and a copy of your wholesale Grocery Catalog, free. It is understood that if I am not satisfied, I may return the goods at your expense and you will return my money at once.

Name.....

Address.....

Express Office.....

NOTICE! Readers of this paper are urged by the Big 4 Company to take advantage of this offer at once —while it is open.